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HITLER DIVIDED FRANCE

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A Factual Account of Conditions in Occupied and Unoccupied France from the Armistice of June 1940 up to the Total Occupation in November 1942

by

G. AND W. FORTUNE

LONDON
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1943

TO

NIMI

BUT FOR WHOM THIS BOOK
MIGHT NEVER HAVE BEEN WRITTEN

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FOREWORD

I FELT greatly honoured when the authors of this fascinating book about France asked me to write a brief foreword. I have known France intimately since my boyhood and had very many contacts there just before the war, and during the first phase. My roots went deep. I also know the authors of this book. At present their identity must be concealed. I fancy it will be revealed, and they may be persuaded to write more, when the war is over. They will tell us of breath-taking experiences.

In the meantime they have provided us with a very important work. Their facilities for seeing the innermost life of France behind the Armistice façade were quite exceptional. They have given us vital facts which everyone should know when forming an opinion about French policy. A great deal of nonsense has been written in the last two years, much of it mere propaganda. This book is a plain statement of fact by two first-rate British observers who showed courage, audacity, and great shrewdness throughout their hazardous experiences.

KENNETH DE COURCY

THE LITTLE HOUSE
BARNSLEY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE
22nd March 1943

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I

THE POLITICAL SCENE

So much has been written about the collapse of France in May and June 1940 that it is not proposed here to attempt to add anything to what has already been said on the subject, but in order to appreciate the political situation in France from the time of the signing of the Armistice to the total occupation in November 1942, it is necessary to review briefly the many changes that have taken place in the political feelings of the French since the Franco-German-Italian Armistice came into effect in the early hours of 25th June 1940.

When it was learned on 17th June 1940 that Marshal Pétain, as head of the newly-formed Government, had asked for armistice terms, the French people were completely stunned by the shock of what seemed to many at the time a shameful surrender. Most Frenchmen believed that the Government would carry on the war even if it meant the abandonment of Metropolitan France and the setting-up of the French Government in North Africa. Nearly a third of the entire population were refugees, two millions of the army had been made prisoner, and the indescribable misery of the country and its people was such that public opinion ceased to exist. The situation greatly favoured the establishment of the Vichy Government, and the country accepted it without question.

When the great bulk of the eleven million refugees had been able to return to their homes, the French people began to take stock of the tragic situation of their country. They listened keenly to the explanations given to them by Marshal Pétain as to why France was forced to ask for an armistice, and to the programme of the new Government for the rebirth

of the nation. It can confidently be said that, whatever the feelings of the French people may have been at the moment when the Armistice was asked for, by the end of July 1940 the vast majority of the population were satisfied that Marshal Pétain had saved France from a terrible fate, and that he had been right in demanding an Armistice. It is perhaps to be regretted that this was not better understood at the time in Britain, as much of the friction between the former allies might thus have been avoided.

Rightly or wrongly, the French people even to-day feel that, much as they want to have a democratic government, the disasters which have overtaken their country have been the fault of their Governments. They have become heartily sick of the ever-changing cabinets which they have had between 1920 and 1940, and the place-seeking and graft which accompanied them. In the aftermath of the signing of the Armistice, the country did not want such men as Daladier, Paul Reynaud, Léon Blum, Georges Bonnet, Laval, or a weakling President like Lebrun. It was with gratitude and confidence that they turned to Marshal Pétain. Was he not the Victor of Verdun ! The greatest living French soldier ! A Marshal of France ! They believed that he alone could lead the country from defeat to renaissance. It was not till much later that many remembered that the Victor of Verdun had also been a notorious defeatist, and that in the years between the wars the worthy old Marshal had been a figure of insignificant importance in French public life, as well as having associated with reactionary elements in politics. Nevertheless even to-day he is the only figure in France who commands genuine respect from those who approve as well as from those who do not approve of his policy. In the latter months of 1940 his personal popularity in France was almost universal, even among the most bitter critics of the Vichy administration. It must not be forgotten that in those days there were few people who believed a British victory to be possible, and it was thought that the

old Marshal was skilfully playing for time. This seemed to be confirmed when on 13th December 1940 he ordered the arrest of Laval, his Prime Minister and nominated successor. A tremendous whispering campaign swept France as to the reasons for this dramatic step, and in every case it was said that the honour of the country had been saved by the personal intervention of the aged Chief of State. His prestige at this time was tremendous, and the French people were dumbfounded at the campaign of abuse which emanated from this country against the character and personal integrity of Marshal Pétain. It was deeply resented and did much to strengthen the authority of the old Marshal, and even in the entirely changed conditions to-day it will not altogether be forgiven. Those who never lost faith in the Allied cause thought that it was in the worst possible taste and politically a grave blunder.

It does not appear to be generally realised in this country that the political situation in France since the collapse has been dominated by the question of the prisoners of war. By 25th June 1940, just under two millions of the flower of the manhood of France had become prisoners in German hands. In November 1942, over two years after the signing of the Armistice, there were a million and a quarter Frenchmen prisoners in Germany. The extent and influence of this disaster on the national life of France is fundamental. It was difficult to find a family in France that had not a near relative a prisoner of war. The grief and sorrow which this brought to French homes was tragic, and it was made all the worse by the fact that no-one knew how much longer it would be before the prisoners would be allowed to return. The future of the French race depends on the fate of the prisoners, and the fate of the prisoners is in the hands of Germany. There is ever present in the minds of most Frenchmen the dread that France's traditional enemy has it in its power to deal a mortal blow to France by slowly starving the prisoners to death.

Such a possibility is not so fantastic as it at first sounds, because the French people have seen with their own eyes — as have also the authors of this book — many prisoners repatriated from Germany on account of being unfit for further work, who have been in such an emaciated state that they have been unable to stand and have had to be taken to hospital with only slender chances of recovery. Many thousands of prisoners have been repatriated in an advanced stage of tuberculosis, brought on by malnutrition and overwork in Germany. The prisoners are made to work ten hours a day for seven days a week, with only one half day off. Although the French Red Cross has done everything in its power to help, it is impossible, owing to the scarcity of food in France itself, to send regular food parcels to Germany. The families of the prisoners are allowed to send a parcel once every two months, and many Frenchwomen starve themselves in order that they may be able to send food to their men-folk in the prison camps. The prisoners are allowed two letters and two postcards a month, to which forms for reply are attached, and this is the only means of correspondence between the prisoner and his family. Many forms are lost in transit, and in every home in France it is a day of both joy and sorrow when the postman brings the familiar form. In the early days everyone believed that the period of captivity would be of short duration, but as the months became years, morale sank lower and lower until to-day it is at a very low ebb indeed. Marshal Pétain has always shown that he never forgets the prisoners, and this has made him a hero in nearly every home in France.

After the dismissal of Laval in December 1940, and the short-lived Flandrin administration, Admiral Darlan became the nominated successor of the Chief of State. Although the French people appreciated that the undoubted efficiency of their fleet was due to Darlan's personal efforts, he completely failed to become a popular figure. It may be said that in many ways he was almost as much disliked as Pierre

Laval himself. Darlan was often described as a " Rue Royale " sailor, meaning that he has always been more of a politician than a naval officer. The French people know that Laval is first and foremost interested in the personal advancement, financial as well as political, of Pierre Laval, and for these reasons he is despised and hated, but they were disgusted by the cringing subservience of Darlan to his new masters. It was felt that at least Laval insisted on being treated as an equal. In France the army has always been the senior service, but with Darlan's accession to power it was very noticeable that all public appointments were given to naval men. Thus such appointments as that of Admiral Baird to be Prefect of Paris in succession to Jean Chiappe were much resented. Nor did the knowledge which soon became public property throughout France that Darlan's son had become a curiously prosperous marine insurance broker in Toulon do anything to enhance his already somewhat tarnished reputation. Many believed that Darlan had given more to the Germans than Laval would have done without getting as much in return. At the same time it was recognised that Darlan's policy of endeavouring to satisfy the Germans on minor points without conceding anything of fundamental importance was a sincere, if misguided, effort to postpone the day of final reckoning.

The fall of the Darlan administration in April 1942 was not unexpected, and perhaps more than anything else it brought home to the French people that the Vichy Government was dependent for its existence on Hitler, although very few Frenchmen considered that their Government was a Quisling one. No Quisling would have dared to have made the outspoken comments which Marshal Pétain made when the people of Alsace-Lorraine were ruthlessly expelled from their homes because they did not wish to become German citizens, nor to have made such trenchant criticism of the German shooting of innocent French hostages. Even the Germans, it was said, were afraid of the old Marshal, whom

they nicknamed " Maréchal Nein Nein ". It was, however, a great shock to the entire French people when in April 1942, under obvious German pressure, Pétain not only took back Laval, but delegated to him complete authority except in military matters, which remained in the hands of Admiral Darlan, who was directly responsible to the Chief of State. The personal respect which almost every Frenchman felt for the old Marshal remained unshaken, but the belief in his political sagacity suffered an irretrievable blow. No-one could forget that Pétain came to the microphone in December 1940 and told his people that in the interests of France he had dismissed Laval, and yet in April 1942 he once again told them that to save France he had taken back Laval.

It may be said that in April 1942, with the assumption of power by Laval, the French people felt the humiliation of their situation more than at any time since the signing of the Armistice. Nevertheless to such an extent did the position of the million and a quarter prisoners of war dominate the political scene that, had Laval been able to negotiate terms with the Germans which would have provided for the release of a really substantial number of prisoners, he would have had the approval of the majority of the people. For over two months neither Pétain nor Laval said a word to the French people as to the progress of the negotiations which were known to be going on with the Germans. At the end of June 1942, it was announced that Laval would broadcast to the nation, and his speech was awaited with deep anxiety. The authors of this book went to the flat of the wife of a prisoner of war to hear the broadcast. When Laval said " Je souhaite la victoire allemande ", our hostess burst into tears. A close examination of the speech is very revealing, in that it is obvious that Laval made every effort to obtain concessions from the Germans with regard to the prisoners of war, knowing that thereby he might gain respect, if not popularity, from the French people, but he had to tell them that the Germans had no intention of releasing any prisoners

except on terms very advantageous to themselves. He then announced the notorious exchange of workers for prisoners. The subtlety and significance of his speech was not lost upon the sensitive minds of the French people.

To what extent are the people of France pro-German ? In France we heard many people described as Anglophile or Anglophobe, and Germanophile and Germanophobe, but in our opinion the number of Frenchmen who sincerely wished to see a German victory and who were prepared to render personal assistance towards the achievement of it was very small indeed. We believe that the number was insignificant — in fact less than 1 per cent of the population.

Unfortunately in this country it seems to be assumed that it is impossible for a Frenchman to be anti-British in his sentiments and yet be a great patriot. Thus one finds our press and the B.B.C. referring to anti-British Frenchmen as traitors to their country, when in fact they are patriots to an almost exaggerated degree in that they think first and foremost of France and her immediate interests, and only secondly of the Allied cause. It does not follow, however, that they are pro-German. In fact many of them are fanatical German-haters, and to a much less extent anti-British in their sentiments. They are certainly not traitors to their country. These are the men who for the most part formed the Vichy Government. Many are either naval officers or members of naval officer families who are traditionally anti-British ; others are old-fashioned reactionaries who dream of the days of Imperial France and welcome the establishment of an authoritarian administration in place of the Third Republic. Thus one finds a man like Admiral Abrial, who was in command of the town of Dunkirk during the evacuation, spending the summer of 1942 touring unoccupied France giving a very anti-British account of " The Truth about Dunkirk ". Yet it would be a mistake to assume that Admiral Abrial wants a German victory, or that he is a traitor to his country. It is not without significance that one

of the first things the Germans did after the total occupation of France on 11th November 1942 was to have many of the officials of the Vichy administration dismissed because, it was alleged, they were de Gaullists. This they certainly were not, but the Germans had good reason to believe that by their actions they had shown themselves to be very anti-German.

It would seem to be generally believed in Great Britain that the Vichy administration was universally loathed and hated in France. It was unfortunate in the interests of a proper understanding of conditions in France that the opinions that found voice in this country were for the most part those of extremist refugees who had come here to join the Fighting French movement. It was inevitable that men like André Philip should have mixed in a circle which was fanatically anti-Vichy and sincerely believed that they represented the great majority of their countrymen. We ourselves would not go so far as to say that the Vichy Government was popular, but we do believe that it was accepted by at least a bare majority of the French people as the only possible Government under the Armistice. However illogical it may seem, although the Vichy Government was accepted as necessary by so many Frenchmen, they did not approve of Laval as head of the Government, and both he and Darlan were as intensely disliked as the old Marshal was respected. Nor must it be thought that these supporters of the Vichy régime were in any way pro-German. They were, as a matter of fact, very pro-British and approved of the Vichy Government because they believed it fulfilled a necessary purpose while awaiting an Allied victory.

This section of the French population was largely inarticulate and formed part of the Catholic Church party which had become an ever-increasing influence since the defeat of France. Undoubtedly, to use a slang phrase which describes perfectly what happened, the Catholic Church " cashed in " on the collapse of France and became the mainstay of the Government. Vichy and the Church

mutually supported one another for their common benefit, and it was most interesting to observe the swing of the pendulum very much in the opposite direction from the opening years of the present century. The quarrel between the Church and the Government over the anti-Jewish measures in September 1942 occurred just after we left France, but it may well be that this rupture between Church and State was the most important thing that has occurred in the internal politics of France since 10th July 1940, when the French State was established in place of the Third Republic.

We have already said that the supporters of a German victory formed such a small proportion of the population as to be of no importance, and we have said that the supporters of the Vichy Government were largely also very pro-Ally in their feelings. No review of French political thought would be complete, however, without a frank discussion of two other groups of opinions. They were diametrically opposed to one another. They were in fact the fanatically anti-British and the equally fanatically pro-British. The former was the smaller of the two groups. They were not pro-German, although often influenced by German propaganda. They were mainly drawn from the intelligentsia, the reactionary old families and the naval officer class. They were, of course, supporters of Vichy and all that it stood for. They loathed de Gaulle and the Fighting French. The mother of an officer with General de Gaulle asked us if we would try and obtain news from England about her son, but she begged us not to tell anyone about him because she was so ashamed that he had deserted his country in its hour of trial. During the fighting in Syria the father of two sons, one of whom was fighting with de Gaulle and one for Vichy, said that the son he was proud of was the one fighting for Vichy, because he was doing his duty to his country. This small anti-British section of the French population was unfortunately very noisy and was always spreading stories about alleged happen-

ings at Dunkirk. They believed that the collapse of France was mainly due to the failure — as they saw it — of Lord Gort to carry out the counter-attack as ordered by General Weygand, because the British Government was more interested in saving the B.E.F. than in saving France. They had eye-witness accounts of the machine-gunning of French sailors in the water after our attack on the French Fleet at Oran. They pointed out that Britain was quietly pursuing her traditional policy of acquiring one French colony after another.

Curious though it may seem to us, these people — and they formed part of the best-educated sections of the population — believed that the war would end in the complete exhaustion of Britain and Europe, and that France would be asked to mediate in the negotiation of peace terms. Quite a number of the men behind Vichy believed this and looked forward to the day when they would become persons of considerable importance. There were, of course, various shades of opinion, but it cannot be too strongly emphasised that this section of the population was absolutely anti-German as well as very suspicious of " perfide Albion " where they did not definitely dislike Britain. Many of those at Vichy believed in the " La France aux Français " movement, although it is difficult to see how such a movement could ever have been anything more than a mere slogan. Perhaps somewhat naturally they did not wish the restoration of France to be dependent on Britain or anyone else, and they recognised that an Allied victory meant oblivion for themselves and their ambitions.

The other and larger group were those who were unreservedly pro-British and who hated the Germans as only a Frenchman can, and despised and loathed everything about the Vichy Government. This group represented about a quarter of the population. They were drawn for the most part from the working class, although one found a surprising number of them among all classes, even among the old

reactionary Catholic families. They never, even in the darkest hour of the Battle of Britain, lost faith in this country or in its ultimate victory. They withstood in the most exemplary fashion the massed attacks of propaganda of all kinds against their idol, England, and by 1942 they were rejoicing because they were satisfied that an Allied victory was only a question of time. They had an almost childlike faith in Britain and believed that when the peace treaty came to be negotiated we would keep our promise to see that France got " a square deal ". Geographically these people tended to be found in the North and North-West of France, rather than in the South, but there were many in the industrial districts of unoccupied France. Included in this group were those who were wholeheartedly supporters of the de Gaullist movement, as it is known in France. The latter represented probably not more than about 10 per cent of the population. There were many reasons for this regrettable state of affairs. General de Gaulle was unknown to the people of France until after the signing of the Armistice and the impressions which they received of his personality were in the main unfavourable. He was much admired as a soldier, but, probably without any justification, the French people came to believe that politically he was ambitious, nor did they consider that in this sphere of his activities he was very far-seeing. It is easy to criticise, but most Frenchmen would have appreciated General de Gaulle more if he had confined himself to military matters and left politics to others. His following was greatest amongst the lower classes and decreased as one ascended the social scale. There were few people in France who seriously believed that when the war was over General de Gaulle would be accepted as the leader of the French nation.

Naturally the state of French public opinion was never static, but in our view it has changed very little fundamentally as the result of the Armistice. One sees so many references in this country to such men as Jacques Doriot and Marcel

Déat that it is difficult for those who have not lived in France during the last two years to realise that such men have no influence whatsoever. In the late summer and autumn of 1940 it seemed as though France might achieve unity, at least in so far as internal politics were concerned, by rallying behind Marshal Pétain. At that time the people were afraid of the future and were influenced by the eighty-three-year-old Chief of State's words : " Suivez-moi. Gardez votre confiance en la France éternelle." During 1941, owing to the unpopularity of the Darlan administration, the situation steadily deteriorated, and with the delegation by Marshal Pétain of his powers to Laval in April 1942 the last semblance of unity was shattered for ever.

It has often been said that the Vichy Government had the support of the unoccupied zone, but not of the occupied zone. During the latter half of 1940 and in the early days of 1941 there was some truth in this statement, but by the summer of 1942 there was no marked difference to be found in a cross-section of public opinion in the two zones.

To summarise the political sentiments of the French people at the time of the total occupation of France in November 1942, we believe that less than 1 per cent were actively pro-German ; that probably about 15 per cent while anti-German were also anti-British ; that probably about 25 per cent were actively pro-British and anti-Vichy ; that the remainder of the population in varying degrees of enthusiasm were supporters of any French Government in France (*i.e.* were opposed to a refugee Government) but at the same time were undoubtedly pro-British and looked forward to an Allied victory. It is difficult to say what the attitude of the supporters of the Vichy Government will be under the total occupation of France, but it would seem that much will depend on whether the Government is able to resist the Germans as it has successfuliy done in the two years following the Armistice of 1940 or whether it is forced to become a purely Quisling administration.

No review of French public opinion during the last two years would be complete without reference to Anglo-French relations as they have been affected by the actual course of events of the war. This subject will be dealt with in the chapter on Propaganda, but there is little doubt that the British attack on the French Fleet at Oran so soon after the defeat of France made a painful impression. Dakar was regarded as quite unnecessary and did much to harm the cause of General de Gaulle. On the other hand, the Frenchman is very realistic and he quickly appreciated that the possession by the Allies of Syria and Madagascar was essential for the successful conduct of the war. He was only surprised that the reasons for the resistance which was offered to our troops were not better understood in this country. It was frequently pointed out to the authors that, unless the French Government undertook to protect their colonies against invasion, no matter by whom, the Germans would insist on doing it for them, and the Allied occupation of Syria might have been a much more difficult task. There are many admirers of the Allied cause in France to-day who think it is a pity that the British Government could not have put more trust in the Vichy Government in 1940. They point out that the action we have taken, at Oran and Dakar, in Syria and Madagascar, has always been taken against France because of fear of what the French Government might do, and not because of what it has done. If this were not so, these Frenchmen say, one would not have had the loyalty of the colonial administrations to the Vichy Government which has so surprised the world.

Even before the total occupation of France by the Germans, there were few people in France who seriously believed that the Vichy Government would survive an Allied victory. It was felt that Marshal Pétain's last duty to his country would be performed if, when peace came, the prisoners came safely home. Did not the Marshal himself say to the people : " Je fais à la France le don de ma

personne pour atténuer son malheur " ? When peace comes his work will be done and he will leave to others the difficult task of reconstruction. One wonders how posterity will judge his labours ! We are still engaged in the battle, and it is not possible now to gain an objective view, but it is conceivable that history will not pass such a critical verdict as some would to-day have us believe.

What of the future ? The Third Republic has been buried and is mourned by few. It is agreed that Vichy will not survive an Allied victory. What kind of constitution does France want after the war ? The authors put this question to friends in all walks of life and in many parts of France. We were unable to get constructive ideas on the subject. Most Frenchmen knew what they did not want, but beyond the general expression of opinion that the future Government must be democratic and must not possess the many faults of the Third Republic, the French people did not seem to have any preconceived ideas on the subject. Perhaps this is a good thing, as it will make the future Government of France — whatever form it may take — more readily acceptable to the entire nation and lay the foundation for a more stable administration than France has had in the immediate past.

2

SHOULD FRANCE HAVE SIGNED AN ARMISTICE?

IT has already been stated in the preceding chapter that the people of France were shocked when, on 17th June 1940, they learned that Marshal Pétain had asked for an Armistice, but that by the end of the following month the majority of the people were satisfied that he had been right in doing so. Obviously there must be good reasons why an entire nation should so suddenly change its mind. It has rightly been said that from the moment of the declaration of war in September 1939 France was defeatist in its attitude. The French are essentially a realistic nation and they knew that it was inevitable that if they were attacked by Germany on the western front they would be defeated. They could not believe, however, when the Armistice was asked for, that in little over a month of active war their armies had been routed and that the end had come. By the end of July 1940, however, in the misery and confusion which followed the Armistice, they realised that their defeat had been complete and that in the circumstances Marshal Pétain took the only possible action when he authorised General Huntziger to negotiate a Treaty of Armistice.

In the two years which elapsed between the signing of the Armistice and the date of our leaving France we had many discussions on the subject with Frenchmen of all classes. Most of our friends were disappointed that their former Ally could not show more sympathy and understanding towards a prostrate and defeated France. They felt instinctively that the people of England were saying that France had let them down, and the propaganda machines of both the conqueror and the Vichy Government did not

hide from them some of the harsh and unfair comments which were made in this country about the collapse of France. In fact it is a tribute to both the French people and the Vichy Government that in their personal relationships with British people in France they did not allow any vindictiveness to enter into the treatment accorded to them. But why, our friends asked, should the British feel that the French let them down? Was it not the case that France and Britain let each other down by continually underestimating the strength of the Germans? Were it not for the English Channel, what would have been the fate of Britain in June 1940? For years, it was pointed out, Britain had acknowledged that her frontier was on the Rhine, but what did she do in 1940 to defend it? She sent a B.E.F. of almost insignificant proportions in comparison with the size of the opposing armies. The French Army, outnumbered three to one in men and completely outmatched in material, was quite unable to withstand the German onslaught. Even so, has not too much been said about the French armies which ran and not enough about those who stayed and fought? Two millions of them encircled and taken prisoner, one hundred thousand killed and almost as many wounded in less than six weeks. Had any army up to that date suffered so many casualties in so short a time? In addition to the army casualties, is it appreciated in this country that in the six weeks of fighting the civilian casualties were more than three times as large as all the British civilian casualties from enemy action in the first three years of the war? As a result of a single bombardment of the station of Rennes on the morning of 17th June 1940, over five thousand persons lost their lives. Nor was this an isolated instance of the wholesale murder of the fleeing refugees.

No Frenchman pretends that the High Command of the Allied armies which met the German attack on 10th May 1940 was very far-seeing, but they believe that the lack of tanks and aeroplanes in itself made a German victory inevit-

able. The official figures issued by the Vichy Government put the number of effective French aircraft available at the outset of the campaign at less than 1000 aeroplanes all told, of which 300 were fighters, and of a total of 92 bombers only 26 were first-line machines.

Whether it was fifth-column activity (much exaggerated in the authors' opinion), refugee problems, lack of equipment and of air support which contributed most, it is nevertheless a fact that by 17th June 1940 the military defeat of France was complete. Would it have been more honest for the French Government to have left for North Africa and refused to sign a separate Armistice in accordance with the Anglo-French agreement of 1940? The question does not really arise, because Mr. Churchill had already before 17th June agreed that the British Government would release France from her undertaking not to sign a separate Armistice.

Would it not have been better for France if her Government had left for North Africa and there continued the struggle? A very debatable point. It nearly happened and would have happened but for the personality of Marshal Pétain and the complete inability of the weakling President Lebrun to make up his mind. At the time, it is true, Marshal Pétain believed that nothing could prevent the early defeat of Britain and therefore it was his duty to stand by the people of France. In any event, the Marshal had the good sense to realise that the wisest policy would be that of "wait and see". Has he not been proved right? Had France refused to sign an Armistice and the Government gone to North Africa or joined the refugee Governments in London, could anything have been done by the Allies to prevent the total occupation of North Africa by Germany in the autumn of 1940? With the complete control of the Mediterranean in 1940 in Axis hands what, many Frenchmen ask, would be the fate of the African continent to-day? The only thing which prevented it was the French Armistice and the "attentiste" policy of the Vichy Government which for over two years

kept the Germans out of North Africa until the Allied Nations had gathered sufficient strength to take possession of this key strategic position. Why then did not Marshal Pétain, before signing the Armistice, order the French Fleet to join the British Fleet? The answer is that neither Marshal Pétain nor the French people could believe that we would not soon suffer the same fate as themselves, and they felt that the fleet ought to be retained by France, not only to safeguard the French Colonial Empire, but for use as a bargaining counter in negotiations with the Germans. It is safe to say that, in the period between the signing of the Armistice in June 1940 and the Allied offensive in North Africa with the consequent total German occupation of France in November 1942, the strength of the Vichy Administration in resisting the Germans lay in their possession of their fleet and the African Colonies. It must not be overlooked that had Marshal Pétain postponed the signing of the Armistice it would not have been possible to have obtained at a later date even the harsh terms of the Franco-German and Franco-Italian Treaties of Armistice of June 1940.

What would have been the position if the Government of France had joined the other Allied refugee Governments in London? The Germans would have set up a Quisling administration or even allowed a Communist revolution to have taken place. If it had suited their purpose, they would have had no hesitation in doing so. The misery of the people of France might well have been even greater than it is to-day. But the factor which undoubtedly decided the aged Marshal to remain with his people was his sincere concern for the fate of the two million prisoners. He believed that with a responsible French Government in France he might be able to do something to alleviate their sufferings. In this he has been partially successful, because before the return of Laval to office in April 1942 three-quarters of a million prisoners had been repatriated to their homes.

Credit must be given to the Vichy Government for their resistance to the Germans to an extent which would not have been possible under a Quisling administration. Much was heard during the summer and autumn of 1942 of Laval's plan for the sending of French workers to Germany in exchange for prisoners. Up to the time of our leaving France in August 1942, Holland and Belgium, countries with populations of less than one-third that of France, but with refugee Governments in London, had each sent more than twice the number of workers to Germany than had France. Undoubtedly the presence of the Vichy Government in unoccupied France did much to prevent Germany from exploiting her victory in the way she was able to do in those other countries whose Governments had fled and left their peoples to the far from tender mercy of the conqueror.

Amongst other things the Vichy Government has been made by many the scapegoat for the loss of Singapore, in that she handed Indo-China over to Japan without offering any resistance. What resistance was she capable of offering, and would it not have been soon overcome by the Japanese who, a year later, so easily conquered the whole of the Far East ? Had we been invited by France to defend Indo-China, could we have done so ? Surely those who attribute the loss of Singapore to the Vichy Government forget that, at the same time as the Japanese took Indo-China from defeated France, the undefeated British Empire was forced, at the behest of Japan, to close the Burma Road and thus stop supplies reaching China.

The Vichy Government born of the Armistice of 1940 is now no more, but it can claim to have achieved much for France in the hour of her defeat. By its " attentiste " policy it paved the way for the Allied mastery of the Mediterranean, it resisted the Germans as much as it dared with considerable success, and it is thought by Frenchmen still in France that history will not deal so unkindly with it as so many people in this country would have one believe.

3

THE TWO ZONES

THE Treaty of Armistice between France and Germany provided for the occupation by Germany of those parts of France as shown by a map signed by both the parties, and this map formed an integral part of the Armistice terms. Beyond stating that the occupied areas would remain in the hands of the invader until such time as the terms of a peace treaty had been negotiated, the Treaty of Armistice was discreetly silent as to Germany's future intentions. At the time of the collapse of France, few people adequately appreciated the effect of the division of France into two parts, or the German cunning of its conception. Certainly the French Government believed that this division would be of short duration, and that with the early defeat of Britain, which they regarded as inevitable, the whole question would have to be again reviewed at the ensuing treaty of peace dictated by a victorious Germany.

A glance at the map showing the line of demarcation gives the impression that it had been drawn hurriedly and in a haphazard fashion, but this was far from being the case. Its apparent haphazardness was indicative of the fact that it was prepared by the Germans before the collapse of France and was based on the theories laid down in Hitler's *Mein Kampf* for the ultimate disposal of France under any future peace treaty. The partition had been arranged by the Germans with great ingenuity and cunning, and in effect divided France into two entirely separate countries. Geographically the line of demarcation followed as far as possible river boundaries in order to render easier the armed maintenance of the frontier between the occupied and the unoccupied zones.

The Two Zones

In addition to the occupied zone the Germans created, immediately after the signing of the Armistice in June 1940, a special zone called the " zone interdite ", or forbidden zone, comprising the industrial regions of the Departments of Pas-de-Calais and Nord which are to this day under the military jurisdiction of the German Headquarters in Brussels. Industrially, with the exception of the Paris area, these two Departments are the most important in France and include such famous manufacturing centres as Lille, Roubaix, and Tourcoing, as well as more than three-quarters of the coal production of France. Many French people fear that the creation of this special zone is the prelude to its inclusion in a post-war German puppet state comprising Holland, Belgium, Luxemburg and this part of France. The creation of a Flemish state is understood to be one of the Nazi ambitions, believing as they do that they will be able to rely on the Flemish minorities in these countries to act as their Quislings. Shortly after the Armistice the return of the refugees to these two Departments was practically forbidden by the occupation authorities, and in true German fashion an order was issued at the same time stating that the agricultural holdings of refugees who did not return within six months would be forfeited and given to Flemish nominees of the Germans' own choosing. By the spring of 1942, although the regulations restricting entry into this forbidden zone were still in force, they had become almost a dead letter owing to lack of the necessary troops to enforce them. In robbing France of her two most highly developed Departments the Germans realised that it would assist them in their long-term policy of reducing France to a purely agricultural country dependent for its heavy industries on the master Reich.

The position of Alsace-Lorraine is curious. It was not even mentioned in any of the clauses of the Armistice Treaty. It was included, of course, in the occupied zone, and the Germans have by their actions shown quite clearly what the future status of this much-disputed territory is to be. It has

in fact already been made part of Germany. In the autumn of 1940 the Germans expelled all French families who had settled in the two unhappy provinces since 1918. They have also expelled those who have not been prepared to adopt German nationality. In some cases they were given only forty-eight hours in which to make up their minds. Those who decided to retain French nationality were sent into unoccupied France, leaving all their possessions behind them except hand luggage. In 1942 French currency ceased to be legal tender in Alsace-Lorraine, and as rapidly as possible the Germans are removing all trace of the fact that these provinces had for twenty years been part of France.

Hitler's division of France had unfortunate results on the character of the French people, and one might almost think that this had been deliberately designed. Between the peoples of the North and the South even in peace-time there is a latent natural antipathy, which by the creation of the two zones was brought to the surface in a most unpleasant fashion. Jealousy and mutual recrimination between the two zones was most noticeable, especially as those in the occupied zone felt that Frenchmen in the unoccupied zone did not sufficiently appreciate the difficulties and shame of living under the German occupation. On the other hand, undoubtedly so far as food was concerned, those in unoccupied France were worse off than their fellow countrymen in the occupied territory, and they felt that the people of the North complained too much of their trials and tribulations under the German yoke without realising that the people of the South, although not suffering from direct occupation by the invader, nevertheless also had their difficulties. Frenchmen returning to Paris from business tours of the unoccupied zone were often very sarcastic in their comments about the attitude and outlook of their fellow countrymen of the South. Many people in both zones consequently felt that the artificial division of France into two states was one of the greatest disasters of the defeat of 1940. There can be little doubt

that the total occupation of France in November 1942 was considered by the Germans to be a military necessity as a result of the strategic changes in the Mediterranean and was not carried out for political reasons.

The creation and fostering of distrust in France seems to be one of the war aims of Germany. In 1940 the Germans made an effort to create a Breton Separatist Movement, but it was a complete failure, and in 1942 there was no part of France which was so demonstratively anti-German as Brittany. The capacity of the prisons in Rennes was so overtaxed, owing to the resistance offered by the Bretons, that men and women had to wait their turn for admission to prison to serve their sentences for minor offences committed with the intention of harassing and annoying the occupation authorities.

It does not seem to have been sufficiently appreciated in this country that the line of demarcation had the effect of dividing France into two distinct and separate states whose interests, owing to the occupation, were often conflicting. These two states, occupied and unoccupied France, had a frontier line separating them — the line of demarcation — which was more closely watched than any international frontier in Europe. One of the states, occupied France, was at war while the other, unoccupied France, was neutral. This led to many complications and difficulties, and trading between the two zones was much restricted, except where it was for the benefit of Germany.

For the civilian population the situation led to many anomalies. Means of communication between the zones were limited in the early days to the equivalent of our Field Service postcard. Later plain one-sided postcards were permitted, known as " Cartes Interzones ". No letters were allowed legally to be passed from one zone to the other, but the interzone postcards could be made to serve the same purpose as did letters by the simple expedient of sending several at a time and numbering them to enable them to be

read in proper sequence on delivery. These postcards never took less than five days to arrive at their destination, and although they were censored by the Germans, out of several hundreds which we received in the course of our two years' stay in France after the German occupation, we never received one with anything scored out. Sometimes for no apparent reason the Germans would hold up the delivery of all interzone postcards for a week or more, and this was a source of great irritation to the French people. There was, of course, no telephone or telegraphic communication between the two zones, except for high Government officials between Vichy and Paris.

No-one was allowed to cross the line of demarcation from one zone to the other except with an *Ausweis* (safe-conduct) granted by the Germans. These *Ausweis* were exceedingly difficult to obtain and could never be had quickly. It was not unusual to wait two months for one and then find that it was after all refused.

This difficulty of making what were sometimes quite short journeys was a great hardship to the French people. Many families were divided, some members of the family living in the one zone and others in the opposite zone, and the first news of the death of a member of the family might be learned by interzone postcard a week after the event had taken place. Certain essential officials of the French administration were granted permanent authority to travel between the two zones, but otherwise anyone wishing to make the journey had to make individual application, stating in detail the reasons for the journey. Family interests were not sufficient grounds for the granting of the application.

All these difficulties of communication and travel between the two zones led to the most extraordinary development of the professional passeur who undertook to see that you or your correspondence would safely arrive in the other zone. There were many ways by which the passeur carried on his trade. For security reasons the route taken had to be

continually changed, and a knowledge of local conditions was essential. Often it was done in collaboration with the German sentries who were in the pay of the passeurs. Sometimes it was necessary to walk ten or fifteen miles dodging the German sentries. It was not unusual for parties of fifteen or twenty people to go across the line together, guided by a passeur, with other passeurs going on in advance to make sure that no German sentries were making unexpected patrols. As the Germans shot quite a number of passeurs whom they caught, the fees charged were naturally high. They varied according to the degree of security and comfort offered in " crossing the line ", and might be anything from £2 to £20, or more in special cases where the passeur was able to arrange for the traveller to be driven to the other side of the line. About one person out of eight who crossed the line was caught by the Germans, and if of French nationality was sent to prison for a period up to a month. For anyone to attempt to cross the demarcation line without the help of a professional passeur was to invite almost certain arrest and imprisonment.

For a Frenchman to cross from occupied into unoccupied France *en fraude* was no crime, provided his civilian papers were in order. To make the journey in the opposite direction, however, was a difficult and more dangerous undertaking. Villages on the German side of the line of demarcation were often searched for those people who had crossed *en fraude*, and they had to be prepared to give convincing reasons for being so near the line of demarcation. From time to time the Germans made great efforts to stop the illegal crossing of the line, but the problem seemed to be too difficult even for them to solve.

The passing of letters from one zone to another was very extensively carried on. The Germans made every possible endeavour to keep the two zones in complete ignorance of what was happening on the opposite sides of the demarcation line. No newspapers were allowed to cross the line, and

although the famous *Paris-Soir* was published in Paris as well as in Lyons, the two editions were quite different and the political control entirely separate. Letters passed *en fraude* were therefore the only means of obtaining reliable knowledge of what was happening in the other zone, and many French people had a means of having letters passed regularly for them. It would not be fair to enumerate the various methods which we ourselves have taken advantage of, because if details were published many of the " combines " could still be traced ; but one which could not now be traced, but which was quite popular in 1940, was for the restaurant-car attendants on the Paris-Vichy express to remove a panel in the dining-saloon at Paris, put the letters in behind the panel, and then screw it back into its normal position. At Vichy the panel was once more unscrewed, the letters removed and posted to their destinations.

It is curious that, although there were no diplomatic relations between Vichy France and Great Britain, more or less normal postal facilities were in operation until the total occupation of France took place. The telegraphic service was both speedy and reliable, and although it was censored we never had any of our messages either refused or delayed.

Letters from England sent by air mail via Lisbon arrived in unoccupied France in about three weeks, but took very much longer going in the opposite direction. The reason for this may have been the inefficiency of the French censorship department, but it was generally thought to be intentional, so that if any news of military importance was contained in the letters it would become valueless on account of the long delay in arriving at its destination.

Contrary to what one might have expected, internal correspondence in German-occupied France was not subject to any general censorship. On the other hand, in the unoccupied zone the Vichy Government maintained a strict censorship of letters between the frontier departments and the big towns such as Lyons and Marseilles.

For those living in the unoccupied zone there were no facilities for correspondence with German-occupied Europe, but, although a Parisian might not send a letter to his family living in Lyons, he could write to a friend in Berlin, Brussels, or Amsterdam.

As is now generally realised, the German occupation of Europe was essentially an organised pillaging expedition, but the robbery was usually done with great attention to the due execution of legal procedure. The Germans did not intend that the payment of reparations to them should be the same farce as were their payments after the war of 1914–18. A condition of the Franco-German Armistice Treaty was the total restriction on the transfer of valuables and securities from occupied into unoccupied France. The Germans requisitioned or bought everything they thought would be of value after the war. They opened safe-deposits and took the contents into " safe custody ", but fortunately the French people were fully alive to the danger, and notwithstanding the long terms of imprisonment which were imposed on the unlucky people who were caught transferring their securities and other valuables to the unoccupied zone, much of the personal wealth of the French people had been put beyond the reach of the greedy invader. With the total occupation of France there is no doubt the Germans will once again plunder what little has been left to the people of the former unoccupied zone.

The most obvious difference between the two zones was, of course, the absence of occupation troops in Vichy France. Occasionally one did see German and Italian uniforms in the unoccupied zone during the visits of the Armistice Commission to the large cities, which they visited in turn, buying up everything they could lay their hands on. In the occupied zone the police and civil administration generally were still under the control of the Vichy Government, but under the terms of the Armistice Treaty they were bound to collaborate in carrying out the wishes of the occupation

authorities. If they obeyed the letter, they certainly did not obey the spirit of these wishes, and the police and civil administration tried as far as possible to protect the civil population from the rigours of the demands of the occupation authorities.

In the unoccupied zone there was not the same spirit. There were no occupation troops to bind the population and the civil administration together in mutual protection from the invader. The Vichy Government may or may not have been Fascist, but it was undoubtedly authoritarian, and the French people were unaccustomed to this form of administration and the Government could not rely on the loyalty of the police and fonctionnaires. This became more noticeable after Laval returned to office in April 1942. To protect themselves, the Vichy Government introduced La Police Nationale, a force organised on typically Gestapo lines, acting over and above the ordinary police and taking its orders direct from the central administration at Vichy. In addition to this National Police or Gestapo, the Vichy administration had mobile police working directly under their orders. These special police were to be found on all main-line fast trains examining the papers of passengers, and road controls were also in operation outside large cities and on the approaches to the Spanish frontier. It was curious that personal papers were very seldom asked for in the occupied zone, but it was impossible to go very far in Vichy France without being asked to produce an identification card.

To leave occupied France *en fraude* was difficult enough, but it was easy in comparison to leaving the unoccupied territory. Under the terms of the Armistice the Vichy Government undertook to see that no men of military age left France. To leave *en règle* an exit visa had to be obtained from the Ministry of the Interior at Vichy. Even when this cherished document had been obtained, a transit visa to enter Spain could not be obtained until a Portuguese visa had

been stamped on the would-be traveller's passport, and in many cases the latter was almost impossible to obtain. All the French Mediterranean seaports were watched, and the Pyrenees were closely guarded.

The disappearance of the unoccupied zone with the total occupation of France by the Germans on 11th November 1942 will be undoubtedly a very good thing for the future of the country. While it is too much to hope that it will bring political unity to Metropolitan France, it will end the feeling that one-half of the country is escaping the burden of occupation by the enemy and will unite all Frenchmen in their desire to free their country of the invader.

4

PROPAGANDA

At the present time the peoples of most countries are the object of an intensive propaganda campaign by their Governments, but in France since June 1940 there have been three powerful and mutually destructive propaganda campaigns continuously competing for the favour of the opinion of the French people. German, French, and British propaganda have been everywhere in evidence, and it is not surprising if the man in the street has been bewildered by such an array of alleged facts, of which it goes without saying the three versions have been very different. Of all the peoples of Europe, the French are perhaps the least susceptible to the subtle ways of propaganda, but since the outbreak of war in 1939 they have certainly had plenty of it, and of the most surprising variety. It is intended here to describe propaganda in France only since the signing of the Armistice in June 1940.

(*a*) The German Propaganda

German propaganda was almost entirely confined to the occupied zone — at least in its direct application. The Vichy Government regarded the unoccupied territory as their private preserve, although the Germans did bring pressure to bear on Vichy to co-operate with their propaganda in specific cases, as, for instance, in the anti-Jewish campaigns. The main objects of the German propaganda machine in France were to make the French people anti-British and to endeavour to make them wish for a German victory. At the same time its constant themes were the failure of democracy, and the necessity of French collaboration with Germany in bestowing on Europe the advantages of the New Order as the only

possible solution for the future of France. Among the secondary objectives of their propaganda was the fostering of anti-Communist and anti-Jewish feeling in France, coupled with a general policy of spreading disunity in French opinion in the belief that the achievement of such a policy would render France weak and impotent. In this respect British propaganda did, unwittingly, succeed where the German propaganda was a failure.

In 1940, after the collapse, the stage did seem set for a violent change-over of French opinion, and the Germans made tremendous efforts to persuade the people of France that all their troubles lay in their alliance with Britain. There was plenty of material at hand to be made use of. For defeated France there was no satisfaction to be gained from the miracle of Dunkirk. It was represented to them as a typical English victory in which the British troops were withdrawn after only twenty days of fighting, and a demonstration that Britain was carrying out her policy of fighting to the last Frenchman. Great use was made of the statement by General Weygand that Lord Gort refused to carry out his orders to counter-attack as he had made up his mind to endeavour to have the B.E.F. evacuated for the defence of Britain whatever the consequences might be for France. To this day the French people have never been given any satisfactory refutation or denial of this most sinister insinuation.

The attack of the British Fleet on the French Navy at Mers-el-Kebir (Oran) in the beginning of July 1940 was all too necessary, but almost inevitably at that time was misunderstood by the French people. The Germans were not slow to make full use of it. They pointed out that many more French sailors had been killed by their former comrades in arms than by the Germans themselves. In the autumn of 1940 in every Métro station in Paris there was a poster of wounded sailors dying in the sea, with the caption " N'oubliez pas Oran ". Mers-el-Kebir was followed by Dakar, the circumstances of which remained a mystery to the French

people, but made excellent propaganda material.

In the early months of the occupation the Germans tried to exploit the anti-British feeling which existed in France towards the end of the last century and during the Boer War. The old controversy about the Fashoda incident was revived, and contemporary articles written by prominent Frenchmen were published with only a brief note at the end to indicate the date when they were written. Lurid details about the Boer War were given great publicity, and in September 1940 *Paris-Soir* (Paris edition) published a four-page supplement of the crudest and most anti-British cartoons which appeared at that time in many countries both in Europe and in America. However, even the Germans realised that this rather stale propaganda was hardly a success, and it was abandoned.

The occupation authorities next turned their attention to endeavouring to persuade the French people that all their troubles had arisen from the alliance with Britain. The Germans repeatedly put the question: "Why did an unprepared France declare war on Germany, whose wish it was to live at peace with her old enemy?" The answer, supplied by Dr. Goebbels' department, was always the same. Britain forced France into the war for her own ends and then left her to her fate. Naturally the British attack on Syria, to be followed later by Madagascar, was useful in the German anti-British campaign, but the logical mind of the French understood the necessity of their occupation for the success of the Allied cause. It was, however, unfortunate that in the Syrian campaign Fighting French troops were employed against French loyalists. German propaganda made much use of this, and many supporters of the Allied cause did feel that their former ally might have spared them the horrors of a miniature civil war.

Throughout the winter of 1940 and all through 1941, the R.A.F. kept up their attacks on Calais, Boulogne, Dieppe, Havre, Cherbourg, Brest, and Lorient, and inevitably these ports suffered considerable civilian casualties. It might be

thought that the districts which suffered most heavily from R.A.F. attacks would be readily susceptible to anti-British propaganda. Quite the contrary was the case. The painful necessity of French people losing their lives in these raids was all the more cheerfully accepted because it was believed that the R.A.F. did sincerely endeavour to bomb only those places where damage could be inflicted on the German war machine with the minimum of risk to the local inhabitants. The authors knew personally one family whose home had been completely destroyed in one of our raids on a French port. The father and mother were both injured, two of their children killed, and their son aged sixteen lost an eye as well as suffering other injuries. Nevertheless this family did not complain and never faltered in their sentiments of friendship and admiration for Britain.

Throughout 1941 the hopes of an ultimate British victory were inspired by the growing strength of our Air Force. Instead of the French people being afraid that this would lead to increased raids on their country, the general feeling in occupied France was one of bitter disappointment that so many readily accessible objectives were left in the peaceful occupation of the enemy. By chance the authors had a grandstand view of the great raid by the R.A.F. on the Renault works in March 1942. The raid began with the dropping of flares which illuminated Paris like broad daylight. With complete disregard for personal safety, the Parisians went to their top windows to obtain the best possible view, and everyone was in a state of expectant excitement more like the celebration of a victory than the commencement of a big bombing raid. The object of the raid was known at once, as it was obvious that the bombs were being dropped in the extensive area occupied by the Renault factory, which is one of the largest single units in Europe, employing in peace-time 35,000 workmen. We were not surprised that the Parisians were pleased that at last the Renault works were being destroyed, because we had so

often been asked why the huge factories in the Paris area, which were producing war equipment of all kinds for the Germans, were not bombed by the R.A.F. All the same, we could not help feeling a little uneasy as to what might be the reactions of these very people when next day they learned of the heavy casualties among the civil population. We need not have worried. Not only did those who supported the Allied cause rejoice, but many who had till then been apathetic immediately became enthusiastic in support of Britain, and in their approval of the raid. One professional man who was a friend of ours and who belonged to the small minority of the anti-British surprised us very much by his strong defence of the raid on the Renault works. He explained that, although he had little sympathy for England, he felt it was a disgrace to France for the Renault factory to be turning out tanks and other equipment for the German Army, and he felt a happier man now that he knew the factory had been destroyed.

As was to be expected, the Germans thought that here was an opportunity to press home their anti-British propaganda campaign. The German-controlled Paris press appeared the following morning with lurid headlines about the savage and cowardly R.A.F. attack on the innocent and unprotected working-class people of Paris. At first it was stated that over a thousand people had been killed, and several times that number severely injured. The final figures, however, were about four hundred killed and twice that number injured. For several days the press was entirely devoted to descriptions of the raid and to hardship tales. Never once was the fact that bombs had been dropped on the Renault works even mentioned, and from the press one would have thought that the raid was indeed a vicious attack on the working-class population of Paris. As everyone knew that extensive damage had been done to the Renault works, the press propaganda was a complete failure. The raid was for several weeks the sole topic of conversation in Paris, and

the knowledge of the accuracy and efficiency of the R.A.F. raised great hopes among the French people that before long an Allied victory would secure their release from the German occupation.

The state funeral of the victims was made the occasion of an attempt by the German propaganda department to make the French people believe that the anguish and grief of the relatives was a spontaneous outburst of hatred against Britain. The French people were not misled by such propaganda and were still less impressed by the supposed horror which the German occupation authorities were alleged to feel that a former ally should be capable of such cowardly conduct towards a defeated comrade. It was noteworthy, moreover, that Cardinal Suhard, Archbishop of Paris, in his message of sympathy to the relatives of the victims, said : " On behalf of the people of France I send you the deepest sympathy in the sad fate which has overtaken the innocent victims of the horrors of war ". The Church did not allow itself to join in the anti-British propaganda, and in so doing correctly interpreted the feelings of the people.

The Parisians were much impressed by the care taken by the R.A.F. to make sure that their bombs fell in the target area. Unflattering comparisons were made between our raids on the factories in the Paris area and those carried out by the Germans in June 1940 when the same objectives were attacked in daylight, and when all but a few of the bombs fell wide of their mark and killed hundreds of civilians. In the big Renault raid our bombers made only two mistakes, and by mischance in both cases civilian hospitals were hit. The use the Germans made of these errors of our pilots can be left to the imagination of the reader. Most of the casualties among the civilian population were caused by blast, and the consequent damage to houses in close proximity to the Renault factory resulted from heavy bombs which had actually fallen inside the target area. The damage to property was extensive, and unfortunately about half the

exhibits in the famous Sèvres museum were destroyed, although happily the most priceless pieces had been moved before the war to a place of safety in the country.

The main effort of the German propaganda was devoted to the anti-British campaign, but this was coupled with violent attacks on democracy in general and the failure of the Third Republic in particular. The Germans have endeavoured to show the French people that all their troubles can ultimately be traced back to the failure of the democratic ideal. It might be thought that if, as was so often asserted in this country, the Ministers of the Vichy Government were Quislings, the German propaganda machine would have done all in its power to help to increase the authority of their hirelings. The Germans knew to their cost that, whatever they might have hoped for in the weeks which immediately followed the signing of the Armistice, the Vichy Government was never a Quisling one. It is true that from time to time the Germans appeared unable to make up their minds what attitude they intended to adopt towards the Vichy administration. Nevertheless, during the latter half of 1941 and in the opening months of 1942, they conducted an intensive campaign in the occupied zone, discrediting and abusing the French Government, and there was little doubt in the minds of most Frenchmen that, despite their many faults, the Governments of Marshal Pétain proved themselves more than a match for the Germans in the never-ending battle of temporising until the happy day when the traditional enemy would be forced to leave French soil. The Germans may or may not have realised that this was fundamentally the policy of the Vichy Government, but as up to the date of the Allied occupation of North Africa they never deemed it necessary to consider their policy towards France in the light of their own eventual defeat, they carried out their propaganda campaigns in France in the belief that the existence or otherwise of a Vichy administration was immaterial to the ultimate objectives of their propaganda.

Propaganda

There was a never-ceasing flow of propaganda about the " New Order " in Europe. It was a pity perhaps that it was not more generally appreciated here that the New Order was, on the face of it, something constructive, and that it represented for the peoples of Europe a new hope for the future far more attractive than the mere restoration of the *status quo* or the Atlantic Charter. There were many Frenchmen who would have welcomed a New Order in Europe with France playing an important, but not necessarily a dominant, role ; and if — but it was a big if — it had been thought that Hitler's New Order would be put into effect with that sincerity which German propaganda wished the French people to believe was behind Germany's conquest of Europe, then it would have received considerable support. It is important for us to realise that the failure of the New Order propaganda lay not in the fundamental conception of the scheme itself but in its execution.

It was because the peoples of Western Europe knew only too well that Germany could not be trusted that they were unimpressed by the conqueror's schemes for the reorganisation of their countries. It must be admitted that after their lightning victories of 1940 the Germans did everything in their power to make the French feel that after all they were not such bad people and were to be trusted. The " correct " attitude adopted by the German Army resulted in the universal use of the sentence " Ils sont très corrects " in the months following the occupation. If the Germans could have resisted the temptation to set in motion their legalised pillaging, then it might have been that with their intensive propaganda they could have won a majority of the French people. The opportunity was there, but fortunately it was not taken. Whether the robbing of France of her wealth was at the time an economic necessity or merely due to the victor's lust for the spoils of his conquest cannot yet be determined, but in any event it left no doubt in the minds of all Frenchmen that the character of the Germans had under-

gone no radical alteration, and that the apparent " correctness " of the army of occupation was a gigantic piece of bluff and propaganda. With the growing resistance in 1941 and the extremely harsh reprisals taken by the Germans, all possibility of the success of the New Order propaganda disappeared for ever.

The Germans carried the " correctness " of the behaviour of the army of occupation to great lengths, and it was undoubtedly both a surprise and a relief to the people of the occupied zone. That it was not spontaneous on the part of the occupation army is well illustrated by the true story of a German soldier returning to Neuilly from Paris by Métro one evening in the autumn of 1940, completely fuddled by too much wine, and repeating over and over again to an amused crowd of Parisians : " Remember, you must always be polite to the civil population. Remember, you must always be polite . . ."

After the German attack on Russia in June 1941, a great deal of the weight of German propaganda was thrown into the crusade against Communism. This campaign followed the usual lines and found some support among those Frenchmen of the bourgeoisie who pass their lives in fear of losing their property as a result of a Communist France.

One of the few really subtle pieces of German propaganda, and one which unfortunately continued even in 1942 to mislead many Frenchmen, was the spreading of rumours of an impending negotiated peace between Britain and Germany. This was done deliberately by the occupation officials. There were several versions, but as a rule a well-placed official of the occupation army disclosed as a secret to a few Frenchmen that negotiations were about to be begun, usually in Spain, for an agreed peace between Britain and Germany. It was suggested that, as Britain was unbeaten, she was naturally unwilling that any of her colonies should provide the spoils for a German victory, but that as France was the ally of neither country, the negotiated peace would be

possible only at her expense. It was then indicated that if only France would declare herself unreservedly on the side of Germany no negotiated peace with Britain would be possible, and that a victorious Germany would see that the French Colonial Empire was increased rather than diminished. These rumours spread all over France and, while they may have been believed by only a few, they caused many Frenchmen to wonder what would be the position of their country when the terms of peace came to be discussed.

It would seem sometimes as if the Germans did make an effort to understand the French character, and it was known that they employed a corps of plain-clothes men who spoke perfect French and whose job it was to mix with civilians and secure as much information as possible as to what was going on under the surface in France, and to find out the true state of public opinion. One of these gentlemen entered the carriage of a friend of ours a few minutes before his train was due to leave Lorient and began to converse with him at length, asking what in his opinion was the French feeling towards the Germans. The reply was not slow in forthcoming. A workman, apparently infuriated by the sight of German uniforms and sufficiently lost in the mass of bustling people not to fear detection, shouted at the top of his voice : " Merde aux Allemands ! " The question thus so pointedly answered, the conversation was not pursued any further.

On the whole it can be said that the German propaganda was a failure. In the days immediately following the Armistice, when Britain stood alone, it met with a certain degree of success, but as the Germans showed themselves in their true colours, and hope in an ultimate Allied victory increased, the effect of their propaganda steadily decreased until by 1942 it made little impression on the opinions of the masses of the French people.

(*b*) The Procès de Riom

Immediately following the Armistice, the Germans launched a tremendous propaganda campaign to prove to the French people that not only were their former leaders responsible for their defeat, but had been guilty of treasonable conduct towards their country in declaring war against Germany. The now notorious Procès de Riom was instituted to satisfy the eager demand of Hitler to have a French court give a verdict that the former leaders of France were guilty of declaring war against a peace-loving Germany. It was the intention of the Germans, sensitive as they always are to foreign opinion, to make worldwide use of the decision which they assumed in advance would be in their favour. After many months of legal wrangling and public appearances of the accused, the indictment was altered to a charge of having failed to prepare France adequately for war. By this subtle move on the part of the Vichy Government, instead of the Riom court giving a verdict in favour of innocent Germany, it was obvious that the only possible verdict could be that the former leaders ought not to have neglected the defences of France when they must have known war was inevitable. Naturally such a verdict would be of no use to the Germans, and at the time of the total occupation of France the Procès was suspended ; but Hitler's fury at being cheated of the decision he so much desired was reflected in the many heated articles in the German-controlled Paris press blaming the Vichy Government for the way they had mishandled the affair.

(*c*) The Vichy Propaganda

The whole of the Vichy Government propaganda in the days immediately following the collapse of France was centred around the person of Marshal Pétain, the Victor of Verdun. The people of a country so long politically unstable,

without a real leader among the numerous politicians who in the past had so irresolutely guided their fortunes, looked to Pétain to redeem the past failures of France and to retrieve at least part of its former prestige and glory out of the ruins of defeat.

To describe Pétain as a traitor, as was done in Britain after the signing of the Franco-German Armistice, was an absurdity. In seeking an Armistice he had undoubtedly acted primarily in the best interests of his country, and his patriotism was beyond question. Moreover, the decision he had taken was ultimately approved by the vast majority of the people, who in the defeat of their own country saw no hope for the Allied cause and considered the collapse of Britain to be only a matter of time. The people as a whole became convinced — maybe rightly — that the signing of an Armistice with Germany and Italy had saved them from the greater misery and suffering that the continuance of the war by a refugee French Government would have entailed. Many did not see how, after the evacuation of the B.E.F. from Dunkirk and the defeat of Metropolitan France, their country could usefully carry on the war in the French colonies.

It was in this atmosphere of distrust of France's former ally — later to be accentuated by our actions at Oran and Dakar — defeatism, and an overwhelming sense of betrayal by former political leaders, that Vichy was able to launch its propaganda campaign in order to rally the people round the new Government and the venerable and respected figure of the Marshal. Such a task was not very difficult in view of the vacillating Governments France had possessed prior to the war, and people were only too ready to try out anything new after their past unhappy experiences. Perhaps France, it was thought, would not come off too badly in spite of her defeat by Germany. The refugees could now return to their homes, and with the defeat of Britain and the signing of a peace treaty, the two million prisoners would soon be with

their families. Pétain of all men, with his record as a soldier in the Great War, was capable of treating with the Germans under the terms of the Armistice Convention, hard though they were. The new Government was going to revive France and to remedy all those evils which had caused French decadence and defeat, as well as heal the wounds caused by the war.

Such was the political theme of Vichy propaganda, which reached the zenith of its influence when Pétain dismissed Laval in December 1940. At this time the Marshal's prestige was at its height and his popularity amongst all sections of the people unquestionable. From that moment, however, in spite of its intensive efforts, the influence of Vichy, and to a lesser extent that of Marshal Pétain, slowly declined, and the Vichy administration became actively disliked by large sections of the population when Laval was taken back into the Government at the beginning of April 1942. Until that time Pétain had always been the bait by which it was hoped to draw the people, and much of the propaganda based on the familiar lines used by Dr. Goebbels was focussed on him. His fireside talks on the wireless were widely listened to, and amazement and admiration were expressed that a man of his years could speak so clearly and firmly. His attendance at public receptions and official gatherings was much publicised, and photographs were printed in the press showing him greeting little children in a manner so reminiscent of Hitler. Pamphlets justifying the signature of the Armistice and showing the extent to which war damage had been repaired by the Government were distributed, and shops anxious to show their loyalty had his photograph prominently displayed in the window.

A form of propaganda which carried the greatest weight with the French people was the interest — and it was undoubtedly a genuine interest — which Pétain took in the welfare of the prisoners of war. Affecting as it did, directly or indirectly, most families of France, this matter lay very

close to the hearts of all French people. Parcels were sent in the name of the Chief of State to these unfortunate men, who more than two years after the signing of an Armistice remained prisoners of their hated enemy. Cigarettes, in packets bearing the Marshal's photograph and the tricolour of France, were distributed to the wounded in the hospitals, together with propaganda pamphlets, and concerts and celebrations were held in his name on special occasions such as Christmas. Privileges said to have been granted by the Chief of State were given to those prisoners who were repatriated from Germany on account of illness, as well as to those demobilised at the end of their hospital treatment. All this tended to cement a bond between Pétain and the people of France, and while his prestige declined after the advent of Laval in April 1942, he has continued to be admired and respected for his undoubted patriotism and sense of duty to his country.

(*d*) Travail, Famille, Patrie

With the passing of the Third Republic and the advent of the French State came the slogan " Travail, Famille, Patrie " to replace the well-known " Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité ". It is easy to scoff at the measures taken by the Vichy administration to maintain the population of France because of their similarity to those adopted by the dictator countries, but the future of the race in France has now become a critical question, as it will be to a lesser extent in this country when the decline in the birth-rate begins to be felt in a few years' time. Wars lost or won are a luxury. While morals as practised in France have been a contributory cause of a birth-rate which has been falling since 1870, the appalling toll of life in the first Great War, together with the considerable losses in the present war and the absence of nearly two million prisoners, will make their effect felt in France for generations to come and must result in even greater decay

among an already fast-declining people. Measures taken by Governments prior to the war were continued by the Vichy Government, and in some cases the financial inducements for people to produce large families were augmented by increases in wages and a reduction in death duties. The publication of vulgar and obscene sexual literature was forbidden ; abortion was severely punished, divorce made more difficult, and the duties and glories of the domestic mother were extolled throughout the press and country. While Germany of necessity needed foreign man-power to maintain her war industries, the retention of the prisoners of war has been in accordance with her plans to reduce France further to a state of impotence, both militarily and economically.

(*e*) Camps de Jeunesse

Apart from cycling, to which he takes as soon as he can walk, sport has never greatly interested the average Frenchman. He has never manifested any great inclination towards sport, not because he does not readily take to it, but because sport has never had the same tradition and degree of popularity as in Britain. To further an improvement in the moral and physical development of the nation, the Vichy Government introduced compulsory physical training into school curriculums, and the well-known tennis player, Jean Borotra, was made head of physical education. While all youth movements were dissolved in the occupied zone, the Boy Scouts still functioned in unoccupied territory and were remarkably popular.

Under the terms of the Armistice, compulsory military service was forbidden by the Germans, but the French youth was not entirely released from his obligations to the State and was made to do several months' service in a labour camp on attaining the age of twenty. For those under this age, and in an attempt to solve the problem of unemployment, a number of voluntary camps were set up for youths, not only

to avoid the payment of unemployment relief, but also to improve the fibre of French youth. Compulsion was only exercised on young men with criminal records, which did much to reform them into useful citizens and to remove a scourge from the streets of France. The Vichy Government, during its two years of existence, introduced many much-needed social reforms. Whatever Government France may have in the future, it will do well not to abolish hastily those aspects of the Vichy policy which, although introduced for propaganda reasons, have been of considerable benefit to France.

(*f*) The Army

Every endeavour was made by the Vichy Government to build up as strong an army as possible within the limits of the Armistice Convention. The pay of the private soldier, so small before the war as to make it impossible for him to supply his essential needs, was substantially increased, and the quality of his equipment and uniform improved. The army in the unoccupied territory numbered just under one hundred thousand men, but with the total occupation of France in November 1942 Hitler ordered the immediate demobilisation of all that remained of France's Metropolitan army.

In 1940 the Vichy propaganda was remarkably successful, but probably only because the people of France were anxious to believe what it told them as the only comfort left to them in their defeat. With the renaissance of French public opinion in 1941 and 1942, coupled with the return to power of Laval, the effectiveness of the propaganda of the Vichy Government suffered a steady decline until, by the summer of 1942, it is true to say that the British propaganda had become the most effective of the three campaigns.

(*g*) The British Propaganda

The British public are so accustomed to being told that our propaganda in Europe is far behind that of our enemies that they are inclined to be incredulous when they hear it praised. In our opinion the British propaganda to France, after making a bad beginning in 1940, was, in the summer of 1942 when we left France, more efficient and more effective than either that of the Germans or that of the Vichy Government.

The principal mediums of spreading our propaganda have been the B.B.C. and our leaflets dropped by aircraft. Both were equally popular and much appreciated. To-day our propaganda rightly concentrates on giving the French people the news, and although there has been a tendency to over-optimism, it was realised throughout France that the B.B.C. news bulletins were the only means of finding out the truth about what was happening in Europe from day to day, and facts about the progress of the war.

Our B.B.C. propaganda to France was, however, not confined merely to the giving of straight news, but impressed on its listeners the necessity of resistance to the German occupation, and of faith in the eventual delivery of France from the invader. It did undoubtedly achieve a great measure of success in this matter and instilled faith and hope in a better future in the minds of millions of Frenchmen. Our propaganda was able to do most excellent work in countering the German and Vichy Government varieties as well as undertaking successfully the delicate task of convincing the French people of the sincerity of our actions in Syria and Madagascar.

The B.B.C. tried out many different ideas for raising the enthusiasm of the French. All these efforts, even though not directly heard or acted on, were discussed throughout France, which in itself was excellent propaganda. For example, the B.B.C. instructions to the population to

organise passive resistance on 14th July, although not universally carried out by any means, were in everyone's thoughts on the day in question. The little couplet in song, " Radio Paris ment, Radio Paris ment, Radio Paris est allemand ", which was repeated almost every day in the B.B.C. French programme, was an outstandingly effective piece of British propaganda.

The leaflets dropped by the R.A.F. were the treasured possessions of millions of Frenchmen. In the early days these were rather dull and were more useful for the enthusiasm they roused for the Allied cause than for the information which the recipients learned from them. That cannot be said, however, of the *Courrier de l'Air*, which was regularly dropped over occupied France. This much-appreciated miniature newspaper was full of eagerly sought news and had excellent photographs. It was well produced and was widely read by all sections of the people, and in spite of the danger of arrest if it was found in one's possession, it was freely passed from hand to hand.

Throughout France there was much spreading of British propaganda even among those who owed their allegiance to the Vichy Government. Thus we knew a highly placed official in one of the Préfectures, who told us how one day a gendarme had reported to him the presence in the region under his jurisdiction of a bundle of British leaflets, the packet having failed to open in falling. Our friend immediately ordered the leaflets to be brought to his office, ostensibly to be destroyed. In point of fact, he distributed them himself amongst his various friends, including ourselves, in spite of the danger he ran in so doing.

While our propaganda to France could show many solid achievements on the credit side, there was unfortunately also a debit side. It is a fact that we were never able to make the cause of General de Gaulle and the Fighting French popular in France. For this much of the blame must rest with General de Gaulle himself, whose attacks on Marshal Pétain were

bitterly resented, even by the most ardent supporters of the Allied cause. There was more support for de Gaullism than there was for General de Gaulle, and as an instrument of propaganda the General was not a success.

(*h*) The " V " Campaign

Probably one of the most successful of the more childish forms of propaganda put over by the B.B.C. was the " V " campaign. Its origin has, however, been widely misunderstood. It was not so much a broadcasting manœuvre planned from Britain as a spontaneous gesture from the European countries themselves; it was in fact a shout of defiance raised from inside the prison of Europe. The " V " campaign began because Monsieur Victor de Laveleye, a former member of the Belgian Government, who was regularly broadcasting from Britain, was seeking a way of making sure that he was really in touch with his audience. He suggested the wearing or the chalking up of a " V " as a symbol to be recognised by other listeners. Monsieur Geersens repeated the idea a fortnight later in the Flemish programme to Belgium, and because of the fascination for the listeners of a programme not intended for them, the idea spread through France and the remainder of Europe like wildfire.

The success of the " V " campaign was clearly shown by the fact that the Germans were forced to adopt it themselves as the only retaliatory measure capable of putting an end to it. Its nuisance value against the Germans was very high, and the French, both young and old, employed every possible device with which to use it to the fullest advantage. V's were pinned on the backs of German officers in the Métro, little red, white, and blue V's were cut out of paper like confetti and sprinkled where Germans were most likely to tread, the field-grey lorries and staff cars of the Wehrmacht were plastered with them, V's made up of hurricane

lamps were laid on the ground to guide British bombers at Lorient, and Beethoven's Fifth Symphony became as popular as the latest dance hit.

Try as they would to put an end to all this, the Germans had little success. Two young schoolgirls cycling along behind a German staff car, blissfully unaware that a German lorry was following them, stuck some V's on the back of it when held up at traffic lights. The lorry then forced them into the kerb, and the driver told them to follow it to the local Kommandantur, where they were soundly admonished, had their names and addresses recorded, and then were told to go. Although they heard no more of the incident, they were followed home to see if the address they had given was correct.

One morning Paris was amazed to see an enormous flag with a large V on it floating merrily in the breeze from the top of the Eiffel Tower. The more imaginative and less intelligent of the Parisians immediately decided that the British Intelligence Service had this time surpassed itself in its alleged nocturnal activities. But the flag remained. The Germans in sheer desperation at their failure to stop the campaign had adopted the sign themselves. All their army vehicles had been decorated with V's overnight, and the propaganda station at Calais, whose traitorous and contemptible puppets devote so much time to endeavouring to lower British morale, was using the opening bars of the famous Fifth Symphony as its call sign.

This time the Germans were successful. In spite of the French evolving a new sign incorporating the Croix de Lorraine, the " V " campaign, as it had been previously known, died a natural death, but not, however, before its object of annoying the Germans had achieved a notable success. To-day it still is a symbol of pro-Ally sympathy and faith in ultimate victory.

(*i*) The Jews

So much has been written by others on the treatment of the Jews in France, both by the Germans and the Vichy Government, that it is not proposed here to give the details of the French anti-Jewish campaign, which are already well known to the reader. It may, however, be of interest to have the views of the authors as to French public opinion on the matter and the extent of popular backing behind the anti-Semitism of the Vichy Government before the total occupation of France.

While during this century anti-Semitism has been on the increase in Germany, in France it has steadily declined since the Dreyfus case. The French people are well known for their tolerance and are showing to-day their sympathy with the Jews in the persecution of innocent people solely on account of their race. Much is done by all classes to give direct help to the unfortunate Jew, provided he is a French Jew. From a most varied association with every class of French society, we found that the only section of the population which was either actively or even passively anti-Semitic comprised those who were fanatically anti-British and anti-Communist, and who hide only with difficulty their jealousy of the superior ability, commercial or otherwise, of the Jew. While it was recognised throughout France that there were Frenchmen of this undesirable type holding positions in the Vichy Government, it was generally presumed that the anti-Semitism of the Vichy régime was the result of great pressure from the Germans, and that as in so many other matters the Vichy Government had to make concessions to the will of the conqueror. Even so, from our own personal knowledge, most of the decrees issued, in both occupied and unoccupied France, with the object of making the life of the Jew impossible, remained to all intents and purposes a dead letter in the hands of the French administration.

It must be said that, while with few exceptions the French nation is proud of its own citizens who are Jews, there is a very definite feeling of resentment against the many German and other Continental Jews who sought refuge in France in the years before the war, and who in the hour of crisis showed that nationalism is stronger than gratitude. " Once a German always a German " seems to be applicable to Jews and Gentiles alike. For two years we knew a young Jew of military age who came to France from Germany over ten years ago. He had, like many others, never adopted French nationality, so as to avoid being conscripted to fight for the country which sheltered him. From his own account of his actions in June 1940, he can only be regarded with the greatest contempt. Since the Armistice he had been living in Paris, collaborating with the occupation authorities, and had thus never been molested. It is not surprising that many French people feel that the time has come to get rid of those foreigners, Jew or otherwise, who have made France their home but are not prepared to undertake the obligations of French citizenship. It is felt that the old French saying, " Every man has two countries, his own and France ", has provided ready material for Fifth Column activities, and that after the war more care will require to be taken regarding those who seek entry into France.

French Jews have been made to suffer for the faults of others, and they receive not only sympathy but material assistance from the vast majority of the people, who view with loathing the treatment they are now undergoing at the hands of the Germans. The unnecessary harshness of the methods of enforcing the decrees against the Jews is repugnant to the Frenchman's sense of decency and fairness towards his fellow beings. For example, in 1941 the Germans arrested many Jews in the Paris area by cordoning off all the exits of certain Métro stations and examining the papers of all travellers. Those with " Juif " marked across their *cartes d'identité* were put into lorries and there and

then taken to concentration camps without being allowed to return home to collect even their most essential personal possessions. Later, Jews in the occupied zone were ordered to wear the yellow Star of David, and with characteristic pettiness the Germans obliged them to give up three clothing points, alleged to be to cover the negligible quantity of material used in making them.

Actions such as these find absolutely no popular support, and with an Allied victory the measures taken against Jews of French nationality will, in our opinion, quickly disappear.

(*j*) The Press

By 11th June 1940 the national newspapers of France had ceased publication. Within three days of the occupation of Paris, the Germans had taken over the empty offices of the famous *Paris-Soir*, and that paper has been published ever since in the occupied zone under the direct control of the German propaganda department. The real *Paris-Soir* was from July 1940 up to the total occupation published at Lyons, but of course it was entirely different and had no connection with the German paper of the same name.

Many of the familiar names were still to be found in the Paris newspaper kiosks, but the news and views which they presented to their readers were all the same dreary stuff which their editors had been given by the German propaganda machine. They were unbelievably dull, and although many people bought them out of sheer habit, they could hardly have existed if it had not been absolutely necessary for every household to buy a daily paper of some kind in order to ascertain the latest information as to rationing.

The only Paris newspaper which had any claim to distinction — a sinister distinction — was *L'Œuvre*. Formerly the mouthpiece of the famous political writer, Geneviève Tabouis, it was taken over in 1940 by the notorious Marcel Déat, " the Frenchman who did not want to die for Dantzig ",

as he calls himself. The distinction which Déat achieved for his paper was that he was able to exceed even the instructions and directions of the German propaganda department in his hate of Britain and of democracy. In March 1942, after the R.A.F. raid on the Renault works, Déat in the editorial columns of *L'Œuvre* called on Marshal Pétain not only to declare war on Britain but to hold British subjects living in unoccupied France as hostages, and " for every innocent Frenchman murdered by the R.A.F. one hostage to be shot ". The only other paper published in France which exceeded Déat's *L'Œuvre* in bad taste and in its orgies of hate against Britain, America, and the Jews was the notorious *Gringoire*, edited by H. de Carbuccia, the millionaire son-in-law of the late Jean Chiappe, himself well known for his anti-British sentiments, and who was killed somewhat mysteriously in an aeroplane crash while on his way to take up his appointment as Vichy Governor of Syria early in 1941. *Gringoire* has, without the slightest attempt to justify its inconsistency, changed its policy to suit the successive French Governments of the last ten years, and in 1939 and the first six months of 1940 it published tirades of abuse against the hateful Germans. When it reappeared after the collapse of France, it found that after all Britain was the real enemy of France.

In the unoccupied zone the press was under the control of the Vichy propaganda department, which was required by the Germans to publish much of their propaganda, but this was done in a more moderate tone and as a rule the printing of considerable portions of the Allied communiqués was allowed, which of course was not the case with the German-controlled Paris press. Greater freedom was permitted to the press in the unoccupied zone, and such papers as *Le Temps* (published at Lyons) maintained, so far as was possible, their pre-war standards.

The occupation authorities allowed neither foreign papers nor papers published in unoccupied France to enter the

occupied zone, but up to the time we left France in the summer of 1942, the Vichy Government allowed special editions of the Swiss papers to enter the unoccupied zone. The sales of these papers must have seriously rivalled the native product, and such papers as the *Journal de Genève*, *Gazette de Lausanne*, *Tribune de Genève*, *La Suisse* and (from June 1942) *La Dépêche de Neuchâtel*, were eagerly and widely read. All these papers, besides publishing the full communiqués of all the combatants, printed articles dealing with war strategy and tactics. The *Journal de Genève*, although the best known, had, like *La Suisse*, a distinctly pro-German bias, and personally we found the less well-known *Tribune de Genève* the best informed as well as having markedly pro-British sentiments. The weekly *Curieux* published a most useful summary of current events and even included translations of articles from the London *Times* and the *Sunday Times*, which were read with great pleasure in a country where it was impossible to see a British newspaper.

(*k*) Broadcasting and Films

Under the terms of the Armistice the Vichy Government was not allowed to have the use of any broadcast transmitters, but very soon this was relaxed and there were a number of stations in unoccupied France. They all had the same programme, which was much below our standards of entertainment and of course was the instrument of Vichy propaganda. In the occupied territory Radio Paris was directly controlled by the Germans, and in its propaganda was often very critical of the Vichy Government. Both Vichy and Radio Paris broadcast news bulletins, but those who listened to them nearly always tuned in to B.B.C. French broadcasts or one of the Swiss stations to get the necessary perspective. The many critics of our B.B.C. would be surprised to know that the general consensus of opinion in France was that British broadcast propaganda had attained a high degree of

success and was more effective than either of its two competitors.

The position of the film industry underwent considerable changes in the summer of 1942. Prior to that date the showing of films in the occupied zone was closely censored by the occupation authorities, and, of course, no new foreign films were allowed to be exhibited. Very few of the pre-war American films were permitted to be shown, and cinemas were forced to put on German or old French films. In the unoccupied territory the film censorship was, until this year, controlled with great laxity from the propaganda department at Vichy. American films were still very popular, and when in May 1942 *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* was shown at several cinemas in Lyons it ran for over a month. At many of the very democratic speeches in the film the audiences clapped and cheered, and it was most surprising how an authoritarian régime could have allowed the film to enter the country.

In March 1942 M. Hervé Plevin was appointed by the Vichy Government as head of the film propaganda and censorship for the whole of France. He moved the Vichy censorship office to Paris, in the knowledge that by doing so it would result in a German film censorship for the whole of France. Unexpired contracts for the showing of American films in unoccupied France were allowed to be completed, but thereafter the same standard of dullness and mediocrity of films was applied throughout the country.

In October 1940 the Germans made it compulsory for every town in occupied France to show their full-length propaganda film on the campaign in Poland. The press was ordered to give descriptions of the enthusiastic audiences, and one Paris paper showed a photograph of a queue waiting for admission to one of the many cinemas showing the film. It was later discovered that the photograph was one of a queue, not for the cinema, but for tobacco. The writers felt that they would like to see for themselves this famous film. One

Sunday night one of them went to the Biarritz Cinema in the Champs Élysées. Not only was there no queue on that occasion, but the entire audience consisted of two German officers and one British subject. Nor was it surprising that the audience was hardly representative of a fashionable Paris cinema on a Sunday night, because the film was badly produced, full of crude propaganda, and not in the least interesting.

5

COLLABORATION AND RESISTANCE

MUCH has been heard in this country of collaboration by the French and by the Vichy Government, and many prejudiced accounts have been published of what has happened since 1940. It might be supposed that, if collaboration was as sincere as has been alleged, many Frenchmen must long for a German victory. In a previous chapter it has been made clear that this is entirely untrue. It may well be asked: "Why, then, is there so much collaboration?"

Before giving the reader the Frenchman's point of view on the subject, let us consider for a moment what might be the situation in this country under a German occupation. It will be agreed that under such an occupation, in order that the mere distribution of the people's daily food should be ensured, the railways would require to be run. In fact they would have to collaborate whether they liked it or not. In order that such essential services as gas, electricity, etc., should be maintained, the mines would require to continue to produce coal. In fact they too would have to collaborate, and so on it goes. Under modern conditions, if the future existence of a highly developed nation is to be ensured, then to a greater or lesser degree industry must continue to produce; and not unexpectedly, in countries occupied by them, the Germans endeavour to see that as far as possible the production is for their benefit. If Britain were enemy-occupied territory, our citizens would have to adopt the policy of collaboration to preserve their very existence. That is what has happened in France. It has also happened in Norway, Holland, and Belgium, but because these countries have refugee Governments in London, the British public hears only of resistance. In the case of France, however,

because after the Armistice of 1940 the Vichy Government broke off diplomatic relations with our country, one hears more of collaboration. It can be said that there has been at least as much resistance in France as in any other country. Evidence of this is the fact that up to the summer of 1942 France, with more than three times the population of either Holland or Belgium, had sent less than half as many workers to Germany to help the Axis war effort.

It is true that immediately following the Armistice of June 1940 the big industrialists, believing that Britain must soon suffer the fate of France, showed that they thought that it was in the best interests of their country to play the German game and to collaborate in order to ensure for France and themselves the place then promised for them in the New Order in Europe. This state of affairs did not last long for two reasons, the first being that quite soon the most ardent collaborators realised that Germany was not sincere in her New Order, and that collaboration was entirely a one-sided affair calculated to benefit Germany alone. The second reason was the realisation that after the Battle of Britain a German victory was not assured. Therefore by the beginning of 1941 those who had willingly collaborated — and even they were in a minority — changed their tactics, and while maintaining an outward semblance of willing co-operation with Germany, they did in fact endeavour to stop all possible material finding its way into the Reich. There were many instances of reprisals being taken against industrialists who in the opinion of the Germans were not doing their best by collaboration to serve the interests of the occupation authorities.

Unlike ourselves, the French are a most logical nation. They know all too well that refusal to collaborate means complete German control and requisition of production. It seems to them to be the obvious thing to collaborate if by doing so the Germans are able to get only 80 per cent of their production instead of the 100 per cent they would

gain as a result of useless resistance.

The Germans employed many ways of blackmailing French people of all classes into collaboration, either forced or apparently free. Factories refusing to work for the Germans were deprived of raw materials, with the result that many of the employees would be thrown out of work, with the consequent dread of being sent to work in Germany. Men out of work were refused public assistance if they refused to go to Germany. In the summer of 1942, under German orders, French industries were concentrated and some 1300 factories were closed down. It was intended that this should enable large numbers of skilled workers to be sent to work in German factories, but such has been the capacity of the French to resist that, despite all pressure, the results from Germany's point of view were disappointing. Laval's scheme for the exchange of prisoners of war for volunteers to go to work in Germany was also a failure, despite intense propaganda.

Resistance takes many forms, some of which are discussed in a later chapter on the Black Market. In conclusion, it must not be forgotten that the French are masters of subtlety, and they found many ways of quietly defeating the benefits to the Germans of collaboration, while during 1941 and 1942 resistance became more and more noticeable, and the Germans themselves realised that they could hope to receive little or nothing from France, except that which it was forced to give.

There are some aspects of the German occupation in relation to industry and commerce which give rise to great concern for the future. The huge daily indemnity which France has to pay to Germany provides the occupation authorities with approximately the equivalent of some £600 millions sterling per annum of surplus French money after payment of the costs of the army of occupation. With this vast sum the occupation authorities have bought up everything of value in France which could be transported to

Germany. Whilst legalised pillage is a great hardship, it does not strike deep into the heart of the nation. Not content with movable property, however, the Germans, with the immense sums of French money at their disposal, have bought controlling interests in many French industries, and have proceeded with the reorganisation of these industries with the object of favouring German industry after the war. This is a most serious matter and one which far-seeing Frenchmen view with anxiety, the more so as the German purchases of shares in French companies have been made in the names of individuals (often in the names of French nominees), thus making the return to a *status quo* after the war almost impossible. This is one of the many difficult problems which the Allies will require to deal with when victory comes, if Germany is to be made to realise that wars do not pay.

6

RATIONING

To the many who knew France in the days of peace and plenty, the position of the *ravitaillement* between the Armistice and total occupation would have been a great shock. It was no less a shock for the French themselves, and with the exception of war news it was undoubtedly the most important and frequent topic of conversation. During the war of 1914–18, although certain restrictions were imposed and some commodities were difficult to come by, the great mass of the people never suffered any marked changes in their way of living as was the case in Great Britain. To-day the people of France are certainly undergoing severe hardships, and, while the situation was still well above starvation level when the authors left France, illness due to malnutrition was widespread and increasing in the large industrial cities. Tuberculosis, too, was reported to be spreading rapidly among a people already too prone to it.

While certain restrictions on the consumption of food had been introduced prior to the Armistice, they represented the height of luxury and little more than a mockery of true rationing in comparison with present-day conditions in France. The French did make some sort of effort to adapt themselves to war-time conditions before the collapse. For example, there were three meatless days a week, but fish and poultry could be obtained in substitution. The consumption of alcohol and the famous French pastries was also restricted, but none of these limitations caused any real hardship to the people as a whole. All this, however, was soon changed by the Germans, and a rigid system of rationing was introduced which soon made itself felt. Undoubtedly large stocks of France's reserves of food were quickly transferred to

Germany, and commodities in which France is normally so rich became rarities, tinned foodstuffs very rapidly disappearing. Many were the tales of how the German troops would buy whole slabs of butter and chocolate and eat them as sandwiches, and descend on shops in quest of those articles which the requirements of rearmament had rendered so scarce in Germany. Under threat of penalties, the shopkeepers were forced to sell, although they endeavoured to conserve their stocks, which at that time were ample, as long as possible.

In the early days of rationing organisation was bad, and it was not uncommon to read in the press that a certain commodity would be available against a specified ticket in the ration card, only to find that the particular foodstuff never came on the market. This caused great hardship and dissatisfaction during the winter of 1940–41. Later the limitations of the transport facilities were better understood, and disorganisation as a result of this was by the summer of 1942 an infrequent occurrence.

There was no equality of sacrifice in the sharing of essential foodstuffs. Circumstances were so entirely different that no comparison can be drawn with the situation in Great Britain. It was not entirely a case of the rich versus the poor, although it cannot be denied that if one was prepared to spend money lavishly, and knew how to set about it, a standard of living far above the average could be maintained. But geography was more important than money, and in the best agricultural parts of France the peasants — and of course the landlords — were living very nearly up to their normal standards, while in the entirely wine-producing country of the South the standard of living was even lower than in the large towns. Although the official rations were subject to local variations, they had the same approximate value throughout the whole of France. Nevertheless, generally speaking one could live better in the occupied than in the unoccupied zone.

The system of rationing was far too complicated. A daily and careful watch had to be kept on the local newspaper to ascertain what commodities might be available against specified letters of the monthly ration sheet. It was necessary to be registered with a particular shopkeeper for almost every foodstuff, and for such things as fish and skimmed milk the shopkeeper gave a card with a number on it. Each day you had to visit the shop to see if your number was included in the day's distribution, details of which were given on a small blackboard outside the shop. The authors were registered for fish for over six weeks before their numbers proved lucky, and daily visits to the shop were necessary, as one never knew when supplies might happen to arrive.

If the rationing had not caused so much misery, the amount of paper and clerical work it involved would have been laughable. We remember with amusement the case of three friends who had just moved into one of the important industrial towns of unoccupied France, and some sixty forms had to be completed by the Food Rationing Department of the *mairie* in order to enable them to be registered with the appropriate retailers for the various rationed goods. More complications were caused in the household in which they were staying over the question of gas consumption. An additional allowance had to be obtained from the gas company, and were this exceeded the supply was liable to be cut off, a most unpleasant prospect when coal and wood were nearly impossible to obtain.

To make matters worse, there were no fewer than eight categories of ration cards for the various classes of consumers, each being entitled to different quantities of rationed commodities, and often to entirely different commodities. Thus chocolate and cocoa were only distributed on the ration cards of children and old people. There were extra rations for workers as well as for a special class known as " heavy workers ".

There were queues everywhere. Certain categories of

women received priority for purposes of queueing up, among these being women expecting children and those who had to work during the day and consequently had no time to *faire la queue.*

Even this tiresome business occasionally had its lighter side. The wounded in France are held in great respect by all classes of French people and receive special consideration from them. One day we saw a wounded soldier looking round for vegetables in the market in Lyons, when suddenly a lorry-load of vegetables arrived from the country and immediately attracted a crowd of some fifty people, mostly made up of women and including the *grand blessé.* At once a gendarme came up and told those with priority cards to go to the head of the queue and at the same time to produce their cards. Not being in possession of one, the wounded man started to move away, but the women would not let him go in spite of his protestations that he had no right to be there. " Cela ne fait rien, vous êtes blessé de la guerre ; restez ici, mon vieux." The soldier, somewhat embarrassed by the attention he had attracted to himself, was thus compelled to stay with the crowd of excited and mostly pregnant women, but none the less was very pleased at being able to purchase his vegetables so easily.

The Germans would have been little flattered had they heard the numerous epithets which they were called by those unfortunate people to whom to *faire la queue* became part of everyday routine. One woman would address another asking if lemons were to be found to-day. " Citrons," the other replied, " il n'y en a pas. Les Doryphores prennent tout." (The Doryphore is the dreaded Colorado potato-beetle with which France is infested, and the everyday expression by which the French alluded to the invaders who had pillaged their country.) The Germans are very sensitive to the variety of names by which the French allude to them and have been known to punish people heard calling them the Boche.

In Paris all arrivals of foodstuffs were very carefully watched by the Germans, and in the unoccupied zone the permanent Armistice Commission took care to see that only the bare mimimum was allowed to find its way to the public markets. In all the big towns the Armistice Commission had plain-clothes officers to keep a watch on the markets. Thus one day the Armistice Commission had overlooked some truck-loads of lemons at the station in Lyons, with the result that these came on the market for public sale, much to the surprise of the people of Lyons, who had not seen any lemons for many months. A few hours later the remainder of the unloaded lemons were on their way to Germany.

Food arriving at Les Halles, the great food market of Paris, was disposed of in the following priority :

(1) To the occupying authorities and the German Army.
(2) To the Fire-fighting Services and Police.
(3) To the hospitals.
(4) To restaurants, with special priority for those taken over for use of the occupation authorities.
(5) To the civilian population.

Naturally people were very bitter about the quantities of food bought openly by the Germans to the detriment of the French population, and on one occasion this gave rise to the following incident. A German officer, engaged in the buying-up of meat, happened to be standing near a tub of blood from the carcases of the slaughtered animals. The crowd of small shopkeepers waiting to buy what was left when his activities were over became more and more infuriated by the sight of the rapidly dwindling supplies, and gradually pushed him forward until he fell into the tub with a resounding splash. The market was thereafter closed for fifteen days by way of reprisal for the incident, and the civilian population deprived of its meat ration for that period.

The difficulties of housekeeping were enormous. No

deliveries of any sort were allowed to be made to private individuals, and the housewife in making her purchases had to supply containers for such things as lentils, sold only in bulk. Personal delivery had to be taken of wood and logs, should one be lucky enough to be able to get tickets with which to purchase them.

Although the details of the rations were constantly changing, the main items such as bread, meat, sugar, and coffee did not alter to any extent in the first six months of 1942. Here are typical rations for the summer of 1942, viz.:

Bread : Normally 275 grms. (10 oz.) per day, but 350 grms. (12½ oz.) and 400 grms. (14 oz.) per day for " worker " and " heavy worker " categories respectively, and 225 grms. (8 oz.) per day for those over seventy years of age.

Meat : Approximately 120 grms. (4 oz.) per week, with considerable variations according to local conditions.

Butter : 250 grms. (9 oz.) per month, plus a certain allowance of fats for cooking purposes or for eating in restaurants.

Sugar : 500 grms. (18 oz.) per month. During the summer of 1942 a single distribution of 500 grms. per person was authorised for jam-making.

Coffee : 150 grms. (5 oz.) per month, of a mixture called Café National consisting of a maximum of 45 grms. (1½ oz.) of pure coffee, the balance being ground barley, wheat, and acorns, and known as " succédané ".

Wine : 1 litre (1 quart) per week.

Milk : Half a litre (1 pint) per week of skimmed milk. Full milk was available only for expectant mothers, young children, and invalids. The latter, however, to obtain full milk, had to forfeit their meat tickets, as well as produce a medical certificate.

Pâte (*e.g.* lentils, macaroni, rice, etc.) : 500 grms. (18 oz.) per month.

Jam : 250 grms. (9 oz.) per month.

Soap : Half a tablet of toilet soap per month, plus an allowance of chemical soap substitute for washing clothes and for household purposes.

Potatoes : There were very occasional distributions of potatoes. During a period of ten weeks spent in Lyons we received the very meagre ration of 4½ lb., and this only on account of the fact that they were in season. In the winter supplies were almost negligible and were replaced by the much-detested " rutabaga ", a sort of swede which is normally used as an animal feeding-stuff. During the winter of 1940–41, before supplies were properly organised, the population was forced to live on this vegetable for weeks on end.

The only unrationed foodstuffs were fruit and vegetables, and in many places the purchase of these commodities was controlled. In Toulouse, for example, special ration cards were in use to enable the inadequate supply of fresh vegetables and fruit to be distributed as fairly as possible. In Lyons during the spring of 1942 special ration tickets had to be used for the purchase of cauliflower, only one per person being allowed during the months of April and May. Invariably there were queues for the inadequate supplies of such vegetables as cabbage, carrots, Spanish onions, leeks, and asparagus.

Owing to transport difficulties, even fresh fruit was scarce and about four times the pre-war price. Oranges, when available, were strictly rationed, and lemons were normally unobtainable.

The quality of the bread deteriorated to an alarming degree. The authors were informed that the dark-brown flour which was supplied to bakers had only a 4 per cent wheat content, and a doctor in Lyons stated that the bread itself became toxic if kept over three days and was then dangerous for human consumption.

A common feature of town life was the sight of men and

women chewing hunks of bread which they had just bought at the baker's shop, being too hungry to wait until they had reached the privacy of their own homes. This in no small degree is indicative of the suffering caused by rationing in France, especially when one recalls the pre-war days when so many delightful varieties of fancy breads could be bought, the manufacture of which is now prohibited by law. In normal times the Frenchman eats considerably more bread than do people in England, and the 10 oz. of bread allowed to the ordinary civilian was a severe curtailment of his peace-time consumption and a hard burden to bear.

As white flour was unobtainable and the use of the substitute brown flour prohibited for the manufacture of cakes, the pastry of the few tarts which could be found in the shops from time to time resembled a kind of papier mâché and was about as palatable, apart from the jam or other sticky matter which could be found in the middle of it. As bakers were only allowed a very small margin of flour over and above the ration tickets they received from the customers, and in their turn had to hand over to the wholesaler, there was not much left over for under-the-counter activities. Nevertheless a little of this did go on, and privileged customers could obtain a fairly eatable cake from time to time.

Apart from fruit and vegetables and a few inedible pastries at fabulous prices, there were no other unrationed foodstuffs to be found on the market, although substitutes of many kinds were sold which in most cases had no food value and were injurious to health. For example, in Lyons there was a brand of salad dressing called " S.O.S. " which was sold to the public with the warning that if it was not used within one month it should be destroyed, as it then became poisonous.

Saccharine could not be purchased by the general public, but as a rule it was supplied in liquid form with coffee in restaurants.

The monthly jam ration of 250 grms. (9 oz.) was of very

poor quality and can only be described as a runny, sticky mess. It was supplied in glass jars which had to be returned in order to obtain the next distribution. These jars were of such poor quality and possessed such ill-fitting lids that they were very easily broken. Bottles of all types became more and more scarce and by 1942 commanded a fair market value. The oft-repeated B.B.C. propaganda suggestion that the French people should smash all their bottles to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Germans was regarded as a rather cruel joke at a time when sufficient bottles for essential household requirements were hard to come by.

The Frenchman in peace-time probably drinks as much wine as does the Englishman beer, and was very hard hit by the reduction in his consumption of a normal one litre per day to a mere one litre per week. In addition to this, other spirits and champagne were practically unobtainable, apart from a few hidden stores and those supplies which people had kept by them for the rainy days now being endured. Whereas in peace-time a good champagne could be bought for 30 francs a bottle, it was necessary in 1942 to pay some 250 francs for stuff of very indifferent quality, and this increase in price applied to all alcoholic drinks such as the few apéritifs — made with saccharine — available, and the very watery forms of what passed as lager beer. The Germans of course bought up the bulk of the wine production and converted it into alcohol for war purposes. The champagne they used to keep up the morale on the Eastern front, and on one occasion thousands of bottles were found by the Russians on taking a village recently evacuated by the Hun. Sitting next to a German officer one day, who was on leave in Paris from Chartres, we had a glimpse into his attaché-case, and apart from a book which he was taking out to read, all that reposed therein were two bottles of champagne. It would now seem that this is such a rarity even for the Germans that they have lost their taste for the real thing. A French firm supplying them with champagne

at a none too modest price was said to making a fabulous profit for the following reason. Of the whole, the bottle was the most expensive part, then the label, and lastly the contents, consisting of gassy sweetened water and costing only a few centimes.

Marshal Pétain, in his endeavour to create a new France, caused the factory which manufactured the famous Pernod to be destroyed, but in spite of this many people were still able to concoct this very potent drink in the security of their own homes. Fortified wines and apéritifs were limited to an alcoholic content of 16 per cent. Perhaps the Marshal was right to adopt these measures, as the consumption of alcohol in France doubled between 1918 and 1939, and may in some degree have been a contributory cause of French decadence.

By 1942 supplies of tobacco were so short that rationing had restricted the amount that any one person could buy to forty cigarettes every ten days, or their equivalent in tobacco which could be rolled into cigarettes. A woman was allowed no ration at all, but was given a special card if her husband was a prisoner of war so that supplies could be sent to him. A daily ration of four cigarettes does not satisfy even the most moderate smoker, and many people took to smoking herbs in so far as they were obtainable. Owing to their scarcity, cigarettes had a very high exchange value against other rare commodities, and one of our friends was exchanging his cigarette ration for bread for his children while he contented himself with smoking herbs. The average Frenchman never dreamed of throwing away his cigarette-ends, but undid them and re-rolled fresh ones with the proceeds, thereby gaining at least one extra cigarette in five. The street scavenger who traded in *mégots* had a very thin time of it, and the most diligent search brought him little reward for his labours.

In restaurants, before being served, one was asked to surrender the necessary tickets. A minimum of tickets

representing 100 grms. of bread and 10 grms. of cooking fat for *déjeuner* and 5 grms. for other meals was required. The monthly ration of butter and cooking fats was so arranged that, if meals were habitually taken in restaurants, there would be no tickets left with which to buy butter for consumption at home. It was similarly arranged in the case of meat, etc., so that, unlike the rationing in this country, one could not have the best of both worlds by habitually having one meal a day in restaurants. In theory the system of rationing was very fair, but it was too involved for easy working, and in practice, as we shall see later, owing to the Black Market, a large proportion of the population made no attempt to live solely off what they were entitled to by law.

How well known were the out-of-door French cafés with their throngs of people, where one half of the world watched the other half go by, and where in peace-time drinks of all sorts could be freely purchased and tongues were loosened into the animated conversation so typical of the Frenchman! Even in 1942 when the sun was shining, it was still sometimes difficult to find a seat, as this integral part of French life seemed in no way to have lost its attraction for the masses, but how little there was to buy and how changed the conversation! Coffee, such as it was, could only be obtained before 3 P.M., and only liquid saccharine was available to sweeten it. Two or three apéritifs made of substitutes and sweetened with saccharine could sometimes be found, but the most popular drinks were a fruit juice, supposedly made of oranges, and the one type of watery lager beer which was procurable. Conversation not unnaturally concerned the ever-present topic of rationing and the difficulties which the war had brought into everyday life in France, and it was always noticeable that it was the Germans who were blamed for the existing state of affairs and not our own country or the blockade.

The quality of the soap was unbelievably bad. It was

largely composed of chalk and acids, and cases occurred where serious consequences resulted when users accidentally allowed soap to get into their eyes. Various soap substitutes were available in the shops, but they possessed little cleansing value and were injurious to clothes as well as to the skin.

In general, the cost of living at least doubled between the Armistice and total occupation, but owing to their scarcity many commodities cost as much as four times their former price. These were the official prices and not the Black Market prices, which will be discussed more fully in the next chapter. As wages had not increased in proportion to the higher cost of living, much suffering resulted. The people, especially in the towns, had lost confidence in the future of the franc and spent what money they had very freely. One got the impression that everyone was anxious to turn money into goods, no matter what kind of goods they might be. On the other hand, the peasant, who was making more money than ever before in his life, was hoarding it, and the only satisfaction which the people of the towns derived from the knowledge of the fortunes which the peasants were making out of the high prices for agricultural products was the thought that, because of their agrarian greed which prevented them from turning their money into goods, when inflation came the peasants would lose all they had made out of exploiting the miseries of town life.

All forms of fuel were rationed. Gas and electricity were restricted on a percentage basis of the 1939 consumption. This inevitably led to many inequalities. A Paris friend of ours had such a generous gas allowance that she was able to allow her friends, who had not even enough gas for cooking, to have a hot bath, which was a very great luxury. The shortage of coal was everywhere acute, the ration for those who cooked with gas being about 50 lb. per person per month. If the permitted maximum consumption of gas or electricity was exceeded, then in addition to a surcharge of anything up to ten times the normal charge for the extra

consumption, the supply was cut off for a period varying from four to fifteen days.

Clothes were severely rationed, and not only were difficult to get even with coupons but were of very poor quality. Everyone was allotted forty points a year, but the number of points which had to be given for various articles of clothing was about double what it is in this country. In addition to giving " points " from the clothes ration card, the most essential things were so scarce that to buy them one had also to obtain a *bon* from the local *mairie* authorising the purchase of the particular article. This applied to such things as leather footwear, wool and woollen garments, including underwear, a suit of clothes or an overcoat. The procedure for obtaining a *bon* was complicated and involved much form-filling, but was greatly feared by most people because it involved a visit from an official to inspect their wardrobe to make sure of the necessity of the application. As most French homes contained some commodity in excess of the meagre permitted maximum, even where a perfectly justifiable application for a *bon* could be made, every endeavour was made to obtain the required goods from other sources, usually in the Black Market, rather than invite the prying eyes of officialdom into the home.

Such things as silk stockings could not be purchased in the shops. In summer most women did not wear any stockings. Soon after the German occupation, and before the greatest pillaging expedition in history had completed its purchase of everything which could be transported to Germany, a German officer was buying silk stockings in a Paris shop to send to his wife in the Fatherland. With unusual provocation he remarked to the assistant who was serving him : " Now at last it is the turn of the German women to wear silk stockings." " Oh, but, sir, if Parisian women do not wear silk stockings, they will no longer be in fashion," was the pert reply.

In spite of the difficulty of obtaining clothes and shoes,

the Frenchwomen still contrived to dress as well and elegantly as ever. It would be true to say that Frenchwomen would look attractive in almost anything; they have a flair for dressing and an ability to wear clothes unsurpassed by the women of any other nation. Wooden shoes were worn by people in all walks of life, and it was surprising how smart they could be made to look; but they cannot be recommended for comfort. The most simple things were difficult to get. Thus we visited ten shops in an endeavour to purchase shoe-laces of any description. Ink, of atrocious quality, could only be had provided you gave up an old bottle of the same kind as the one to be purchased.

Household articles, such as china and furniture, were very expensive and almost impossible to obtain. Some of our friends were invited to a cup of coffee at the conclusion of an evening's amusement in the flat of a woman who was in the coffee trade — hence her ability to supply the luxury of a cup of pure coffee. The flat being small, one of the party sat on a table on which were placed the coffee-cups of real Limoges china, and when the time arrived for the guests to depart, he slid off the table, precipitating all the china on to the floor, where it not very surprisingly broke into smithereens. Our hostess was nearly in tears at the sight of her best china in a hundred pieces, but was slightly mollified by the promise of its early replacement. However, a search through most of the chinaware shops in Lyons was unavailing, as cups of any kind were unobtainable.

In peace-time shopping generally ranks among the pleasures of the housewife. How circumstances have altered! In France Madame would go out with a heavy heart and a feeling of dread that she would not be able to get all she needed for the children when they returned hungry from school. At best all she could hope for were a few unrationed vegetables and those foodstuffs which could be had against tickets, and for these she would have to queue up. Gone was the joy of being able to buy a few special delicacies

for the table, and as for clothes or oddments for the house, it was a waste of time looking for them.

How little people in Britain appreciate their good fortune and how small is their cause for complaint by comparison with their former ally ! Conditions in Britain would have been the height of luxury for a Frenchman at the time the authors left France, and our rationing will have to go a very long way before we approach in any degree the privations and sufferings of the French.

7

THE BLACK MARKET

THE picture which we have drawn of rationing in France and of the difficulties of the housewife in purchasing every-day necessities would be, however, quite out of perspective unless it were placed alongside a description of the extent and variety of the " Marché Noir " which was undoubtedly one of the most interesting features of French life under the Armistice. It is difficult in mere words to convey to the reader the fact that the whole life of the people of France hinged, to a greater or lesser degree, on some aspect of the Black Market. It was impossible to buy any commodity, whether for domestic or commercial use, without having uppermost in one's mind considerations of the Black Market situation. Everyone in the country was affected by the existence of the Black Market every day of his life, even if he himself was not an active participant in under-the-counter activities.

In this country the Black Market racketeers are very rightly regarded as criminals, and those who buy from them as saboteurs of the nation's war effort. To appreciate the situation as it was in France, one has to realise that, whatever the law may have said, the French people regarded dealing in the Marché Noir as perfectly justifiable, and it is true to say that in some ways it was a form of patriotism. Thus, to provide the people of Paris with their official ration of butter required 1500 tons per month, but it was officially admitted in July 1942 by the Vichy Minister of Food that it was known that in addition to the 1500 tons there was a further 2900 tons coming into the city every month. Actually the figure was probably considerably higher. It hardly requires to be said that the German Army would have very much

liked to lay its hands on these extra supplies. A Frenchman felt that butter snatched from the hungry jaws of the invader tasted almost better than that bought with his ration cards, even if it did cost ten shillings a pound.

In peace-time France was agriculturally almost self-supporting, and in some commodities was a considerable exporter to Britain, and the French people realised only too well that if it were not for the continuous requisitioning carried out by the German Army in the occupied zone, and in the unoccupied zone by the Permanent Armistice Commission, France could, even to-day, be the best-fed country in Europe. It was felt, therefore, that everything that went into the Black Market was so much the less that the Germans would receive, and certainly the quantity of agricultural produce which has been denied to the Germans since the Armistice must be enormous. In the occupied zone immediately after the Armistice all reserves of food had to be disclosed to the occupation authorities, and the large quantities which were hidden at that time have since gradually found their way on to the Black Market.

In the latter part of 1940 and in the first half of 1941, maximum prices were officially fixed for practically everything. Not only were new goods no longer being manufactured for internal consumption in France, but the ample stocks of most things which existed at the time of the collapse were bought, requisitioned, or pillaged by the invader. Obviously such things as leather goods, typewriters, bicycles, and a hundred and one household articles soon became scarce and no-one wanted to sell at the official maximum prices. It was not long before the shops became empty, but it was difficult to tell whether the shopkeeper really had no supplies or whether his stock was discreetly hidden because he was not prepared to sell at the official maximum prices. For example, the authors were very friendly with the proprietor of a shop in the occupied zone, dealing in typewriters. In the autumn of 1940 our friend realised that

inevitably the price of all typewriters must rise notwithstanding the maximum prices which had been fixed. He put all his available capital into the purchase of machines in any condition, and by the summer of 1941, although the controlled maximum price for a second-hand standard model typewriter was 5000 francs (about £30), he had no difficulty in finding purchasers at 10,000 francs (£60). In the spring of 1942 it was impossible to purchase a machine in first-class order in the occupied zone for less than 20,000 francs (£120), and when we left Paris, in April 1942, our friend had just completed a transaction in which the price paid was 30,000 francs (£180) for a second-hand American-built machine in good condition, the controlled price of which was still 5000 francs (£30).

All raw materials were controlled not only as to their price but also in their distribution, to enable the ultimate product to be put at the disposal of the occupation authorities. This situation led to a Black Market in raw materials, which were purchased by the manufacturer at enhanced prices to enable him to have a surplus of finished goods over and above the quota which he had to produce from the supply of raw materials obtained by him under licence. This surplus, in turn, was sold in the Marché Noir. The head of a well-known firm of textile manufacturers in Roubaix, in the North of France, was arrested and charged in July 1942 with having made a profit of over £60,000 from illegal sales of goods manufactured by his company. This will perhaps give some indication of the extent of Black Market activities in France since the Armistice in 1940.

To give a further example : the price of all waste products was controlled. There was a great demand for these, the Germans themselves being large buyers. Manufacturers required a licence to purchase at the controlled price, and the merchants required authority to sell to them, again so as to make sure that the finished product would be at the disposal of the occupation authorities. But the manufacturer

was anxious to obtain supplies without a licence so that he would be able to manufacture goods to sell in the Marché Noir, and the waste merchant did not wish to sell at the controlled price because there was little profit in it for him, so, being Frenchmen, it was not difficult for them to get together and come to a mutually satisfactory agreement, not a word of which was in writing. Both parties felt that, while they might be making a considerable profit for themselves, they were at the same time serving the best interests of their country, because by the " combine ", as it was called, the Germans obtained less out of France than would otherwise be the case.

It may well be asked why the Germans allowed this sort of thing to go on. Certainly they were well aware of what was happening, and they took many steps to endeavour to stop it. They were unsuccessful for two reasons. In the first place, France is a large country and not even the Germans could ever hope to obtain the control of the smaller manufacturers and merchants except with their willing co-operation. In 1940 the Germans believed that propaganda would enable them to achieve this, but by 1942 they realised that this was a forlorn hope, and they introduced other measures to endeavour to control the raw-material Black Market. By putting pressure on the Vichy Government, they made the latter appoint inspectors whose job it was to check the activities of the Marché Noir. Lorries carrying raw materials and such things as scrap iron or waste paper were often stopped in the street and the source of supply and the ultimate destination ascertained, so that a check might be made as to whether it was covered by a licence or, as was quite probably the case, was a " combine " to defeat the regulations. The work of the inspector was made none the easier when he found that frequently offenders against the regulations were the Germans themselves, who were so anxious to secure supplies that they were prepared to buy in the Black Market. As a rule they did so with the aid of

unscrupulous intermediaries, and when the merchant found out that the goods which he was selling would after all eventually find their way to Germany, he endeavoured to cease supplying. Blackmail was then applied and the position of the unfortunate merchant became unenviable.

The other reason why the Germans were unable to control Black Market activities lay at their own doorstep. Bribery and corruption became everyday practice with the army of occupation. It is naturally difficult to give concrete examples, but most Frenchmen have had some experience of it. A very definite technique was evolved by the Germans for dealing with the civilian population of France. The permission of the occupation authorities had to be obtained before a hundred and one things could be legally done. The Germans never refused any request when it was first submitted to them. On the contrary, they showed every semblance of being willing to comply with it. Subsequently, however, the applicant was informed that it was regretted that certain difficulties had arisen and in view of such-and-such a regulation it was doubtful . . . Finally the request would be refused, but often with a proviso. Thus it was suggested to the disappointed applicant for an *Ausweis* to cross from the occupied into the unoccupied zone that his application might after all be granted if he could produce a good pair of shoes of a certain size. The required shoes were bought by the applicant in the Black Market, and he was duly handed his papers in exchange. One heard many similar stories in France during 1941 and 1942.

There were many less direct forms of bribery and corruption, and often a Frenchman on good terms with the appropriate authorities acted as intermediary. Cases were by no means unknown of these unsavoury gentlemen accepting the money and later failing to produce the goods. The authors were offered in Paris an *Ausweis* to the unoccupied zone for 10,000 francs (about £60) each. A *carte d'identité* could be purchased in the spring of 1941 for 2500 francs

(about £15), and it was said that complete papers for America, including the cost of the journey as far as Lisbon, could be had from the Germans for 100,000 francs (about £600).

While the possession of false papers was, of course, a serious offence, it was in fact seldom detected. In France one requires an official form duly rubber-stamped for almost everything, but provided such papers have all the outward indications of legality, the circumstances under which they may have been obtained are never questioned. If the required document bears the requisite *cachet*, then all is well. Such a system lends itself most readily to abuse. Rubber stamps can be easily forged — the authors themselves on one occasion " borrowed " a set of rubber stamps to regularise their papers — and in a country where the loyalty of the police to the Government was open to question, there were many ways and means of unofficially getting what was required to keep oneself *en règle*.

In 1941 and 1942 a considerable trade took place in the printing and selling of false ration tickets. Offenders were very severely punished if they were caught, and even the many who openly bought in the Black Market regarded the trafficking in false ration cards as a contemptible practice, because it deprived the poorest people of the little that was available for them against their allotted tickets. The employees in the food offices — the local *mairies* — undoubtedly pilfered food tickets on a considerable scale and thus were able to augment their own rations and to sell tickets to their friends. Dismissals among the staff of these offices were not unusual, and the temptation for the abuse of their position must certainly have been considerable.

There were many aspects of the Black Market, and some forms of obtaining goods which, while not in themselves illegal, must be considered under this heading. Thus, there were few people in Paris or in the more important towns of occupied and unoccupied France who did not possess friends or relatives in the country who from time to time sent them

parcels of food containing things almost unobtainable in these towns. Though this was no breach of the law, it was a form of Black Market and had become a normal feature of everyday life. It had reached such dimensions during the course of 1942 that measures were being hinted at in the press for its control or suppression, and this gave rise to much controversy. *Le Temps*, one of the few papers maintaining moderation and independence of thought, published a leading article in which it very subtly got in a dig at the Vichy Government. Why, it wrote, should a Government which has taken as its motto the words " Travail, Famille, Patrie " choose to suppress the family parcel which is surely founded on those very words and only serves to strengthen family ties ?

Another form of Black Market trading was carried on very extensively by restaurant proprietors. In Paris, on the direct orders of the Germans, six of the well-known restaurants were not allowed to ask any of their customers for the ration tickets normally required by law to be surrendered with each meal. Furthermore, these specially privileged restaurants were given facilities for obtaining everything they required to maintain their peace-time standards. Naturally such places were popular notwithstanding the very high cost of a meal. For the concessions which had been granted to them, the proprietors of these restaurants were expected to see that these privileges were shared equally between the French civilian population and the German Army and officials of the occupation. The idea behind all this was a rather crude attempt to preserve " la vie parisienne " for the benefit of the occupation authorities.

This privilege of having a meal " sans ticket " was by no means limited to these six restaurants, but operated illegally in both the occupied and the unoccupied zones in most of the smaller restaurants where the customers were known to the proprietor and the personal touch had not been lost. The larger establishments had to keep within the law, as

the presence of an agent-provocateur was difficult to detect among a large and varied clientele. In the smaller places, however, by paying a special price which enabled the proprietor to purchase supplies in the Black Market, one could have a meal, perhaps not up to peace-time standards, but very much better than the normal standard of living in France to-day.

The authors used to have a meal regularly in the summer of 1942 in one of the smaller restaurants situated in a back street in Lyons, and, having been introduced to the proprietor by a friend, were soon granted many favours. We were given meat with every meal, as well as other rationed foodstuffs, and only bread tickets were asked for. Instead of the permitted maximum of a quarter of a litre of wine, we were allowed as much as we wished for. Prices were high. For a meal costing, according to the menu, 2s., the charge " sans ticket " was 10s., but this was not considered to be unduly expensive.

Generally speaking, it was easier and cheaper to deal in the Black Market in the occupied than in the unoccupied zone. In both zones the police did make efforts to bring to justice those who bought and sold illegally, but any law which has not at least the backing of a majority of the people is difficult to enforce, and no-one in France regarded Black Market dealing as a crime. Many were prosecuted, but as the French believed that they were defeating the invader by such dealing, it continued to flourish. In the Department of the Nord alone during the year 1941, fines totalling 10,000,000 francs (£60,000) were imposed, but with big profits one could afford to pay big fines. Concentration camps were established, and offenders received long sentences of confinement in these camps, but nevertheless the law remained unheeded.

In addition to the requisitioning carried out by the occupation authorities, or on their behalf, the peasants were compelled to deliver up to the French authorities, to meet

civilian needs, quotas of produce fixed according to the declared amount of stock on their farms. There were few farmers who had not a considerable number of animals of all kinds on their holdings which had never been declared. They had, consequently, surplus produce which they were able to sell at Black Market prices. They became extremely independent in their attitude, and in addition to being paid these prices for their produce insisted that the poor townsman must bring with him some commodity which was difficult to get as a condition of being allowed to purchase supplies. Sometimes it was cigarettes, sometimes coffee, and in one case the farmer refused to sell butter to a friend of ours unless he could obtain for him a special brand of lubricating oil for his butter-making machine. Our friend found the oil, but the merchant would only sell it provided that, in addition to a cash payment, half a pound of coffee was offered in exchange. So by a promise of a considerable supply of butter, the coffee was found and given in exchange for the oil, which was given to the farmer, who then agreed to sell his butter to our friend. This way of living, while full of unexpected complications, did give an added pleasure to the obtaining of the necessities of life, and some zest to an otherwise dull existence.

Exchange of goods, called the *troc*, became an everyday feature of French life. The small shopkeepers were able by this means to live better than any other class. Coffee was exchanged for bread ; bread for butcher's meat ; butcher's meat for dairy produce ; and in exchange for cigarettes one could get almost anything. The question may well be asked : " But where did the shopkeeper get his surplus supplies ? " It was true that, according to the regulations, he should have had none, but a Frenchman has his own methods of dealing with regulations, and it would have been impossible to find a shopkeeper in France who had not a hidden surplus which he was prepared to part with provided the inducement to do so was big enough. The inducement might be in cash,

or it might be the *troc*, or partly one and partly the other.

Here are a few examples of Black Market transactions from our own personal experiences. For a kilo of sugar costing normally 8 francs, we used to pay from 80 to 120 francs, that is over 10s. a pound. The price of bread was about 4d. a pound, but in the Black Market it cost 2s. a pound, and it was of all things the hardest to get. Tea was almost unobtainable, and in Paris in the spring of 1942 the price was over £5 sterling a pound. Similarly, English cigarettes cost 30s. for fifty. In the summer of 1942 we found that there were more or less fixed prices in the Black Market for certain commodities. Thus French cigarettes, the normal price of which was 8 francs, cost 40 to 50 francs, equivalent to about 5s. or 6s. for a packet of twenty. Clothes were very expensive. To buy a pair of leather shoes in 1942, without giving either the necessary *bon* or coupons, cost £8 sterling. Similarly a suit of clothes of average quality cost £30. There was a considerable Black Market in gold. The authors sold in 1942 some 20-franc gold pieces, which have a gold content of less than a sovereign, for £12 each. American dollars were in great demand but difficult to get.

In the summer of 1942 friends of ours with whom we were staying were in the habit of going to the country every week to see what they could persuade the peasants to part with. The very fact that these weekly excursions were illegal seemed to give them an added piquancy, and although always very exhausted after tramping from farm to farm with a heavy suitcase, our friends seemed to enjoy themselves. Returning to town was always rather a thrill, because the police did occasionally catch people with rather too obviously bulging bags as they left the more important stations. In addition to the confiscation of the goods, a few weeks had to be spent in the quietude of a prison cell. Our friends were offered a pig by a relative living in the country, and they would have accepted but for the fact that to transport it to their house in town was far beyond their powers of camou-

flage necessary to avoid detection by the gendarmerie. Nevertheless they did not do too badly. We were in all a family of five, and an average haul from their weekly excursion to the country included five dozen eggs, four pounds of butter, and several dozen small cheeses made of skimmed or goat's milk. A chicken or a rabbit, or sometimes part of a goat or a goose, together with a few pounds of potatoes or other vegetables, completed the weekly purchase. For obvious reasons the authors remained at home on these occasions, but it was a considerable thrill to await the arrival of the weekly haul, and to see spread out the produce which had been purchased and which was unobtainable in the city. How we would have lived without all these extra supplies has been a subject of much speculation, but as it was we considered ourselves to be amongst the most fortunate people in the town in which we stayed, and even put on weight, an almost unknown occurrence in France since 1940.

Perhaps our experiences were rather exceptional, but nevertheless all classes of the community were dealers in some form or another in the Black Market. From our observations we would say that at least half the population obtained regular weekly supplies of foodstuffs without ration cards. About a further 25 per cent obtained occasional supplies from Black Market sources. The remainder of the population were either too poor or had not the facilities for obtaining goods by under-the-counter methods, and in consequence suffered great hardships, living as they did entirely off the meagre official ration.

8

PARIS UNDER THE NAZI HEEL

MANY people in Britain, when looking at the ruins of their own capital, feel resentment against the French for having declared Paris an open city in the face of the rapidly advancing enemy. While it is doubtful whether its defence would have materially affected the course of the war, it would certainly have resulted in damage and destruction to a city which has been the pleasure-ground of the traveller and the pride of every Frenchman's heart. Paris has been spared the horrors of indiscriminate bombing, and its famous buildings and monuments still remain intact to attract the curious gaze of groups of sightseers. But the latter are now clad in the field-grey uniform which has become a detested feature of all occupied countries. London has by no means the same degree of sentimental attraction for the Englishman as has Paris for the Frenchman; the latter bitterly resents the presence of the invader in his beloved capital and would give much to be able to rid it of his contaminating influence. Small wonder the rumour had often been put about that the Germans would evacuate Paris in return for concessions by Vichy so that the so-called French Government could return to its traditional home, a thing Pétain had steadfastly refused to do prior to the total occupation of France. But Paris had too high a propaganda value in the eyes of the Germans for this to be lightly undertaken — it had become the principal playground for their troops on leave.

How little does the Paris of to-day resemble that of yesterday, but its spirit is only asleep while the occupation endures and will come to life again when the last Hun has been driven out of the gates. What remains to-day of the true life of the gayest of European capitals?

On 13th June 1940, when the Germans occupied the city, there were only about 700,000 of its three million citizens who had not joined in the mad exodus of the early days of that month. Those who stayed behind represented for the most part the working-class section of the population who had neither the means nor the facilities for joining in the evacuation of the city. The comparative emptiness of the city made it very much easier for the Germans to secure control of Paris, well prepared as they were for this event which their Teutonic thoroughness had duly anticipated. When its citizens began to return to their homes in July and August, the Nazis were already well established and were in complete control of all the administrative services of the capital.

Even in August 1942 there were over 300,000 people who normally resided in Paris who had never returned to their homes. Among these could be counted many Jews and political refugees who wisely did not wait to be caught by the invader, as well as those Government officials who were then at Vichy. Then there were the executives of business firms who had evacuated their head offices from the capital before the arrival of the Germans and had never returned. Many well-to-do French families paid only brief visits to their Paris homes and spent most of their time at their country properties so as to avoid contact with the invader.

As the absent population of Paris represented the greater proportion of the intelligentsia and the official classes, the effect was disastrous on the life of the city as it was known and loved by so many foreigners before the war. Its cultural life was subjected to German propaganda control along the all too familiar lines. The question is frequently asked: "But what was Paris really like at the beginning of 1942?" It is difficult to express in words what one who knew the city in happier days felt when wandering about the dull and empty streets at that time, but the general impression was that of being in a rather uninteresting provincial

town — Paris had in fact become socially and politically a backwater.

Many things contributed to create this atmosphere. An idea of it could be gained simply by standing on the top of any building which overlooked the city and surveying the scene. Nazi flags flew from those buildings taken over by the Wehrmacht, and official proclamations written in French and German were pinned to the doors of churches and municipal buildings. A deathly hush pervaded the streets and boulevards as if the city were holding its breath in the face of its defilement by the enemy, one day to breathe a sigh of relief when the last of them was finally expelled. How could Paris be itself without its taxis, not a single one of which could then be seen on the streets ? Gone were the aggressive hooting and screeching of brakes which were a feature of the peace-time life of the city. Gone was the stream of invective hurled by one driver at another to the amusement of the passer-by. The number of private cars was almost negligible, but the streets were full of the grey cars and lorries of the occupation authorities, driven at furious speeds and with total disregard of danger to the pedestrian. What horse traffic there was diminished as the Germans requisitioned more and more horses with which to alleviate their transport difficulties in Russia.

Most disastrous of all to the life of Paris was the presence of the occupation authorities. They seemed to have made up their minds to stay and had adapted the houses and offices requisitioned by them to suit their smallest requirement and convenience. France, and Paris in particular, was to be a home from home until peace returned. The Étoile district was crowded with smartly dressed German officers, and the not-so-well-dressed other ranks were everywhere in evidence making the best of their liberty in Hitler's most treasured prize of the war. Life, however, was not so much fun for them as it had been in the early days of the occupation. Money could be spent in those days, and parcels of luxuries

long forgotten by the majority of Germans could be sent home to relatives and purchased at bargain prices with the proceeds of the Armistice indemnity. By 1942 the shops had been stripped of anything worth buying, and money was of little value when there was almost nothing to be bought with it, and when what could be bought was for the most part rubbish and extremely expensive.

While the Parisian detested the sight of the German troops, he was at the same time vastly amused by the German women who were to be seen in their drab uniforms and who for the most part were used to staff the telephonic and telegraphic sections of the German administrative organisations. The French women had a great contempt for the lumpy figures of these Fräuleins and for the lack of smartness of their apparel. Some of the German women who were not in uniform had attempted to dress in true Paris fashion, but with amusing and disastrous results to their general *ensemble*.

Paris had become a centre of relaxation for German troops. Large numbers of them were stationed in the city for quite short periods (in addition to the normal garrison), and it was rumoured that many were sent there on leave from the Eastern front so that they should not spread tales of the horrors of the war in Russia among their friends and relatives at home, nor see the devastation caused by the R.A.F. bombing of the industrial cities of the Reich. All this was part of a cunningly conceived German Army propaganda to show their troops the glories of the victories of the Fatherland. They were taken in buses on official sightseeing tours round the city, visiting the Eiffel Tower, the Bois de Boulogne, museums, and churches, and were always given a short lecture while examining the list of Napoleon's victories so thoroughly detailed on the walls of the Arc de Triomphe. One wonders what thoughts passed through their minds, and whether the lecturer reminded them of the fate of a man who in his day had challenged the armed might of the rest of

Europe only to be thwarted in his ambitions by Britain and Russia.

As there were no taxis and only a very limited number of buses, the Parisians had to use the Métro, which was appallingly overcrowded, and of which many subsidiary stations were closed for the duration of the war. There had been a certain revival of horse-drawn vehicles, and many weird-looking antiques had found a new lease of life, but a shortage of fodder and German requisitioning had ultimately curtailed even this modest form of transport. The bicycle was of course very much in evidence, cycling being one of the most popular of French pastimes, and was used by young and old alike. Perhaps one of the most amusing features of Paris life, and one which was the subject of many humorous stories, was the two-man bicycle rickshaw taxi. These strange and often unsafe-looking vehicles consisted of small trailer cars, similar to a covered-in side-car, to seat two people, and were attached to a tandem bicycle. There were also a few single-seater cars with one-man bicycles. These could be hired just as one would hire a taxi and were at least a tribute to the Frenchman's capacity for adapting himself to circumstances and to his genius for improvisation. The Government did try to control the prices charged by these " taxi drivers ", but the latter simply refused to carry people unless they paid the pre-control price.

One of the greatest annoyances caused by the occupation in the early days was the midnight curfew, after which one spent the rest of the night in prison if found wandering abroad. When this, however, had been in force for over two years, the Parisian had become accustomed to it and did not object to it, as the night life of the city was given over to the Germans, and in any case was always for the benefit of the foreigner rather than for himself. During December 1941, when as a reprisal for the shooting of German officers the Germans imposed a 6 P.M. to 6 A.M. curfew, they so completely paralysed the life of the city, with consequent incon-

venience to themselves, that the normal curfew hours were soon restored ; nor did they ever repeat the experiment.

The Germans might have stripped France, and Paris in particular, of most of her possessions, but there was one thing they had never won, and that was a place in the respect and affection of the people. This was by no means due to lack of trying. It was common knowledge that it had been instilled into officers and men alike that they were to behave in as correct a manner as possible to the civilian population. Before the days of the internment, two Englishwomen were walking down the Champs Élysées talking loudly, when they passed a German officer who turned and asked them what nationality they were. One of them answered, tossing her head as she did so, " I'm English, and proud of it." The German officer at once replied, " And so you should be," saluted, and went on his way.

They might rule with a mailed fist, but it was very softly gloved, and yet not softly enough to delude the Frenchman with his keen intelligence and inborn loathing and hatred of the invader. In all countries can be found men and women who will sacrifice national interests for money, but there are fewer in France than in this country is thought to be the case. Prostitution knows no national barriers, and the brothels of Montmartre functioned for friend and foe alike just as in peace-time they functioned for the benefit of British and American tourists. In other respects the Germans had failed to arouse any feeling in the heart of the Parisian but contempt and disdain, above all for their lack of subtlety and finesse. Except in so far as contact with the invader could not be avoided, the Germans were ignored or treated as untouchables by the vast majority of the people, and this they could not understand and very much took to heart. They had become the victims of practical jokes, in which the Parisian is so skilled. On enquiring the way they were usually sent off in precisely the opposite direction to that in which they wanted to travel. Labels were pinned on

the backs of officers in the Métro, and derogatory verses and jokes were spread around. By sly innuendo, salt was rubbed into the open wound of the German failure to invade Britain or to end the campaign in Russia. For example, a German officer when buying a civilian coat for post-war wear in a well-known Paris store had to be helped by the shop assistant to get his arm through the sleeve, and with an air of bland politeness she made the following comment : " On ne peut pas facilement passer la Manche, n'est-ce pas, monsieur ? " (La Manche, as well as meaning sleeve, is the French for the Channel.)

Germans are sometimes attacked and killed by unknown assailants whereupon whole *arrondissements* are cordoned off and no-one allowed to leave until papers have been scrutinised. One of these incidents had very fortunate results for a British internee from St. Denis. The latter was being taken to the dentist in a German car, there being one guard as escort and the driver. Owing to an *attentat* in one of the *arrondissements* of Paris, all papers were being examined and occupants of cars ordered to get out for this purpose. While the driver and guard were being questioned by the police, the internee, a Trappist monk, taking advantage of the prevailing confusion, slipped away into the crowd and was never seen again. The life of the omnipotent invader is not all he would wish it to be, and the crown of victory sits uncomfortably on his head.

Shortly after the occupation, with the rate of exchange fixed at 20 francs to the mark, the German troops were able to eat and drink at ridiculously cheap prices, but by 1942 the milk and honey had ceased to flow. Champagne, wine, and spirits were then extremely expensive and indeed often difficult to procure at any price. By the beginning of 1942 it was practically impossible to buy any of the well-known apéritifs, with the exception of an occasional bottle of Byrrh. This was said to be due to the fact that the owner of this particular brand was a collaborator and thus allowed certain

supplies with which to continue his business. Wine for home consumption was of course strictly rationed, and in restaurants customers were restricted to a quarter of a litre. The absence of apéritifs and the scarcity of champagnes, wine, and spirits, to say nothing of the lack of supplies of good food, had taken much pleasure out of the Parisians' visits to their customary restaurants. Yet people still frequented them to discuss the topics of the day, and even the watery supplies of what beer and cider were available could not kill this lifelong habit and familiar characteristic of Parisian life.

In the privacy of their Kommandanturs the Germans fed well enough, and this gave rise to an amusing story which was related one evening among American friends of ours. Mr. P. and his wife were invited out to dine with friends and were amazed to be confronted with the sight of a ham. " But where did you get it ? " they asked their hostess. " Well," said the latter, " I sent our native servant out with some money to buy what he could for dinner this evening, and he returned with the ham, among other things, which he said he had got for nothing. The source of this free gift puzzled me a lot, but on further patient enquiry I received the following answer : ' Me no pay for ham, me got good friend in Kommandantur.' " Surely no ham ever tasted better than that one !

The most pathetic feature of everyday life was undoubtedly the queue which formed every morning in the markets and shopping centres. Lack of fuel caused incredible hardship amongst a people too under-nourished to obtain the necessary calories from their food to replace the shortage. During the winter of 1941–42 it was not unusual to find aged men and women who had collapsed in the street from cold and lack of nourishment, and as in our own big cities, black-coated workers were compelled to work covered by coats or rugs in order to counteract the effects of the cold. By 1942 most of the big stores like " Aux Trois Quartiers ", the

Magasin du Louvre, and Les Galeries Lafayette had closed all their upper floors and were only using the ground floor, which they found quite sufficient for all they had to sell. Shopping as it is known even now in this country was non-existent in Paris — the city had been pillaged.

Perhaps the only advantage Paris had in 1942 over London was in the matter of the black-out. Why should the Parisian have bothered to take measures against the R.A.F. when he welcomed the bombing of his oppressors and the factories working for them ? He rarely even troubled to go into a shelter during an alert, and shouts of " Vive l'Angleterre " and " A bas les Boches " could be heard amid the sound of bombs and gunfire. Not even the Germans had been able to make the black-out completely effective, and looking out over the silent roof-tops at night, many an unscreened window could be seen as if shining its light in defiance of the invader.

The cinemas in Paris were crowded because they were one of the few remaining relaxations available, but the public were heartily sick of seeing nothing but old French films and German films, usually of the propaganda type. Yet the theatre was enjoying a minor boom. The Germans had brought complete opera companies from Berlin to give performances in the Paris Opera House and had tried to make these occasions ones of great social importance, but the audiences were almost wholly drawn from the army of occupation and from the considerable German civilian colony which had arrived in Paris in its wake. There had been a great revival of " straight " plays, and it is perhaps curious that since 1940 there had been a permanent company of Bernard Shaw players, and for a time there were two theatres presenting Shaw plays.

It was interesting to walk in the city instead of taking the Métro, to see what the streets and boulevards really looked like after two years of German occupation. One felt oppressed, as if with an unhealthy air of restraint ; the faces

of the passers-by were gaunt and drawn, and gone was their customary look of gaiety. Yet the privations forced on them by the invader had not killed their spirit, and the rigours and hardships of the occupation were being met with the sense of reality and courage which characterises the Parisian.

Whole blocks of buildings were cordoned off from the street — buildings guarded by German sentries and housing their considerable administrative organisations. At the main-line railway stations all notices were in German and French, and the Hun soldiery mingled with the crowds seeking places in the infrequent trains, eventually to find their seats in the special carriages reserved for occupation troops. As at all great London termini, loud-speakers announced the departures, again in both languages, and in spite of the difficulties caused by the occupation, trains ran fairly well to time.

The Paris of early 1942 was but a shadow of her former self, yet optimism ran higher and higher among the population at the news of successful Allied resistance and victories. Paris will regain her well-known air of gaiety when the Germans are finally compelled to leave, and will once again become the city so beloved by the people of France.

9

TRANSPORT

IT is said that transport is the key to modern civilisation, and one of the most remarkable developments in France since the German occupation has been the way the nation has adapted itself to radical alterations in its transport systems. Since the collapse of 1940, the life of the people has been carried on, certainly not as in peace-time, but in a way which would not have been possible but for the rapid adoption of revolutionary changes in all forms of transport, especially in road transport.

Since the Armistice only 2 per cent of the normal pre-war petrol supply has been available for the whole of France, and this meagre supply has been almost wholly required for official purposes, such as the army (in the unoccupied zone), police, fire brigade, ambulance, and other services. A very small number of Frenchmen holding high official positions under the Vichy Government were allowed limited quantities of petrol, but otherwise all forms of transport have had to be improvised. It was an outstanding achievement that by 1942 about 20 per cent of the normal number of commercial motor vehicles were in use, and approximately half that percentage of private cars, all using fuels other than petrol.

In peace-time it was compulsory by law in France to have a small proportion of home-produced alcohol blended with all motor spirit sold to the public. This alcohol was produced in the wine-growing country in the South of France, but in addition to that produced from grapes a certain amount was obtained from the growing of Jerusalem artichokes. After the Armistice it was found that, by increasing the compression ratio of the engine and making certain alterations to the

carburettor, the normal performance of the average motor car could be obtained by using pure commercial alcohol with a loss of only approximately 20 per cent in consumption. Unfortunately it was not long before the Germans, realising the value of French commercial alcohol for its high octane content for use in aviation petrol, requisitioned the entire output, and the quantity of wine which they allowed to be produced in France was in consequence totally inadequate for the minimum requirements of the people, notwithstanding the greatly increased production of alcohol from the more intensive cultivation of Jerusalem artichokes.

Before the war the French Government encouraged the motor manufacturers to produce motor lorries running on fuel other than petrol. It was fortunate indeed for France that this was so, as to-day France is many years ahead of any other country in the production of producer-gas vehicles. In consequence, before the war Renault had put into large-scale production heavy lorries running entirely on producer gas obtained from a burner using charcoal. Berliet also manufactured a successful heavy motor lorry using wood. In both these cases the vehicles were designed expressly to run only on producer gas ; the burners, filters, etc., necessary for the production of the gas, are built into the vehicle as a component part of it and in practice have proved to be extremely efficient. A number of other manufacturers had on the market lorries running on high-pressure ordinary commercial gas which was carried in cylinders built into the chassis of the vehicle.

Since the Armistice several new types of producer gas have been developed, and many private cars have been adapted to run on this fuel. In the early days some of the adaptations were strange and extremely ugly affairs, but by the end of 1940 it was possible to buy a compact unit which fitted on to the luggage-grid of a private car and was painted to harmonise with the colour-scheme of the car. The Panhard factory made a neat trailer producer-gas unit for

large cars where it was not wished to damage the vehicle by having a built-in unit.

It is not suggested that producer gas has come to stay in the case of private cars, but for heavy lorries it has considerable possibilities. There will be a permanent market for such vehicles in countries where wood or charcoal is readily available and petrol is expensive on account of the difficulties of transport.

In all there were four types of producer gas in large-scale use, viz. :

(1) Burning charcoal : Renault and many other makes.
(2) Burning wood : Berliet and a few other makes.
(3) Burning coal : used principally in the North of France, but upkeep costs were said to be high and maintenance difficult.
(4) Burning a mixture of coal and wood : this type was in the early stages of development, and it was thought to have considerable possibilities.

High-pressure gas has already been mentioned as being used in lorries; and for small cars, used mainly near large cities, it became very popular, the cylinders, usually three or four, being carried on the roof of the car. For a small horse-power car it was more efficient, and had the great advantage over producer gas that it required no maintenance other than the replenishment of the cylinders.

In Paris and suburbs about one thousand omnibuses were in use, running on low-pressure gas. In place of the unsightly bag used in this country, there was a rigid metal container which was streamlined so that the single-deck bus appeared to have a dummy upper storey. At the various termini there were plugs in the street enabling the gas container to be quickly recharged.

Finally, the use of vehicles running on electricity from storage batteries has seen considerable development. While it was mainly used for heavy lorries, it was becoming

increasingly popular for light delivery vans, and there were also a few private cars. In some towns, buses and private cars, originally constructed to run on petrol, had been quite successfully converted to run on electricity from storage batteries.

Somewhat naturally, the great standby for those who had to move about was the bicycle. Always popular in France, it became fashionable for professional people, such as doctors who, being allowed no petrol, had to visit their patients by bicycle.

The shortage of rubber tyres was gradually becoming a more and more serious matter for all forms of road transport. Powers were taken to requisition the tyres of vehicles which were not in use, but the Vichy Government made appeals to Frenchmen to surrender their tyres voluntarily, the significant guarantee being given that tyres so surrendered would only be used on French roads. This was doubted by many, and in quite a few cases tyres had been taken off laid-up vehicles and removed to a safe hiding-place to avoid being requisitioned.

In the occupied zone the Germans called upon everyone owning motor vehicles to declare them to the authorities, and many were requisitioned. To a large extent the German army of occupation used French cars and lorries, and sometimes one even saw Crossley tenders with the letters R.A.F. clearly showing through the field-grey paint of the new owners. In Paris too the Germans had in use a number of Humber staff cars and Bedford lorries.

As the shortage of coal and axle-grease became more and more acute, still fewer trains were available on the railways for the use of the French civilian population. By 1942, both in occupied and unoccupied France, only about 30 per cent of the pre-war services were in operation, and consequently trains were always very crowded. On all the main-line services from Paris every seat was bookable, and to be sure of getting on to the train it was necessary to reserve places

at least a week in advance. Special carriages were reserved for members of the army of occupation. Despite the overcrowding, trains as a rule ran up to time, but every month saw more and more restrictions on railway travel. As is well known, the Germans have sent much French rolling stock to Germany, and this traffic was entirely one-way. As coal was practically unobtainable in the occupied zone, it was fortunate for France that the railways in the South are very largely electrified, otherwise conditions would have been worse than they were.

The canal system of France is very extensive indeed and is an essential part of the country's transport system. Much damage was done to it in the fighting in the North, but the Germans realised that, if they were to obtain the benefit of French industrial capacity, the canals must be restored to normal working order. This was done in a surprisingly short space of time, and early in 1941 the canal system was operating normally.

Passenger air services did not exist in the occupied territory but Air France operated services between Vichy, Lyons, and Marseilles in unoccupied France. Before the Allied occupation of French North Africa there was both a postal and passenger air service between Metropolitan France and the colonies remaining under Vichy control. In addition, until November 1942, regular passenger and goods steamer services were in operation between Marseilles and Port Vendres and the African ports. No doubt the British Navy had good reasons for allowing the considerable quantities of goods which arrived at Marseilles to slip through our blockade, but most Frenchmen were well aware that only about 20 per cent of the quantity of goods arriving at the Mediterranean ports remained in unoccupied France, and notwithstanding the added hardship of the loss of these imports, they will submit without complaint to the complete blockade now rendered possible by the Allied occupation of the French North African colonies.

10

TREATMENT OF BRITISH SUBJECTS

IT is difficult in mere words to express adequately the sympathy and friendship which the people of France showed both in deeds and words to English people who remained in France during the anxious months which followed the collapse of June 1940. Whatever may have been the official attitude of the authorities, in practice nothing but kindness and consideration, and a flexible interpretation of any restrictive regulations, governed the relations between the English and the powers-that-be. This has been spoken of by so many who have returned to this country that no more need be said, except perhaps that it is no small tribute to the French character that, at a time of mutual recrimination between our Governments, the French did not allow themselves to be prejudiced in their personal contacts with British subjects.

In the unoccupied zone the Vichy Government issued orders under German pressure that British subjects must not reside in either the frontier or coastal departments, but the local authorities were given permission to grant exemption to this rule in special cases. British subjects in business in the unoccupied zone were allowed to continue their occupations wherever they happened to be. In fact the greatest hardship which British subjects suffered was the restriction of the amount allowed to be remitted to them from this country to £10 a month, as a result of unoccupied France coming within the scope of the Trading with the Enemy Act.

In the occupied zone, however, the treatment by the Germans of British civilians was very different. In July 1940 all male British subjects between the ages of eighteen and sixty were arrested and interned. Some time later, with

a few exceptions, all British male subjects were interned. At first they were crowded together — three in a single cell — in a disused Paris prison, but later they were removed to a large barracks at St. Denis, near Paris. At one time there were nearly 3000 of them, but by the summer of 1942 there were about 2000, of whom more than 200 were over sixty years old. On the whole they were reasonably well treated, allowed to receive a limited amount of money, and the Red Cross and St. John's War Organisation sent each internee a regular weekly parcel. The German occupation of Paris brought to light in a striking manner how many people of different nationalities are technically British subjects. Many of the British internees knew no English, and so the St. Denis camp leaders opened a school to teach it. There was also a school for the 45 unfortunate children who had to accompany their parents into internment.

In the North of France a number of British subjects who were arrested by the Germans before the final collapse of France were sent to camps in Germany. Among those arrested at Le Touquet was P. G. Wodehouse, whose broadcast from Berlin in the autumn of 1940 created such an unfavourable impression. He subsequently went to live on the estate, in the Hartz Mountains, of a German Air Force officer whom he had met in Hollywood. Later the Germans gave facilities for his wife to join him.

On 5th December 1940, on orders issued by the German Government, a round-up of all British subjects, male and female, was made throughout the occupied territory. Before the war the English colony in Paris alone was 30,000 strong, and although many had had the good sense to leave occupied territory, thousands had remained. The arrangements made by the Germans were totally inadequate, and the horrors of the camp at Besançon are too well known to require repetition. It was typical of the German mentality that no sooner had the camp been moved to its luxurious quarters at Vittel than a film unit appeared so as to prove to the world that

the story of their scandalous treatment of British women internees was untrue.

The Germans have made for themselves a reputation for efficiency. It was not noticeable in the carrying-out of the internment of British women in December 1940. Persons not liable to internment were arrested by mistake, and in some cases it was two months before they were able to get their release. Many hundreds who were liable to be interned were never arrested, often for the most casual of reasons. Thus those who by chance were out shopping when the police called for them at their homes were never interned. One Englishwoman was going to the station in a German car on the way to be interned when the car broke down. She was advised to return to her home and await the arrival of another car, which never came, and she was not interned. As these fortunate people still had to sign the police register every day and report in person to the German Kommandantur once a month, their good luck was no secret to the authorities. Apart from a general policy of so-called reprisals, it is difficult to see from the security point of view what object was achieved by such a haphazard method of carrying out the internment of enemy aliens. Moreover, early in 1941 the Germans released hundreds of the women internees, and it seemed as though they were themselves anxious to reduce the numbers at Besançon and later at Vittel. By the summer of 1942 all that remained of the 5000 British subjects arrested in December 1940 were some 1300 women and about 100 men. These figures are exclusive of those interned at St. Denis or of those who were in June 1940 sent to camps in Germany.

It is perhaps ironical, but quite a number of the British internees both at St. Denis and Vittel would not, under existing conditions, wish to have their liberty even if they were offered it. When released from camp the internees must reside within certain narrow limits of occupied territory, they are not allowed by the Germans to earn their living, and

as it is impossible for them to exist on the allowance of £10 per month granted by the British Government (calculated at pre-war rates of exchange), materially they are better off in the camps, where at least the bare minimum of the necessities of life is assured. (This allowance of £10 has recently been increased.) In winter too the camps are adequately heated, whereas if the internees had their liberty, they certainly would not be warm as well. These considerations must not be allowed to detract from the realisation of the unpleasantness of camp life. It is a soul-destroying experience, but the alternative is such a hard struggle for mere existence that materially there is little to choose between the two. This is well illustrated by the following story from Parisian life. The wife of a British subject living near the capital had two daughters, one a French subject and the other British. The daughter who was French could not of course be interned, but the English girl was. One day a German policeman called to rebuke the mother for some infringement of the many regulations governing non-interned enemy aliens, and he stated that the authorities were considering the question of whether or not she should be sent to join her daughter in the camp at Vittel. The astonished German beat a hasty retreat when the mother told him she was most anxious to go, and asked when she could leave for camp !

In December 1941, on the anniversary of the great round-up of British civilians living in occupied France, the police again called at the houses of all British subjects, usually at a very early hour in the morning. Most of those released from internment during 1941 had kept a suitcase ready packed for fear of being taken back to camp, and immediately concluded that they were to be again arrested. However, on this occasion the police had orders to read out a list of twelve things which British subjects must not do in enemy-occupied territory, and then demand that a signed acknowledgment be given that these conditions would be duly observed. Among

other things, wireless sets were confiscated, telephones disconnected, ownership of motor cars forbidden, and a curfew prohibiting British subjects from being away from their homes between one hour before sunset and one hour after dawn was imposed.

It has already been mentioned that all British subjects were required to sign a special register at the local police station every day, and to present themselves once a month to the local German Kommandantur to have a special card stamped. It is an interesting sidelight on German intentions that these cards, which were issued by the occupation authorities in 1940, were provided with the necessary space for five years' further stamping before requiring to be renewed. This was only one of many indications that the Germans from the outset contemplated a lengthy occupation of France.

The attitude of many of the British women to being interned was remarkable. Some had undoubtedly led such boring lives in peace-time that they regarded the period spent in internment as most interesting and not to be missed on any account. Others less stoical were seriously affected as well as embittered by their experiences, for which they sometimes most unjustly blamed the French authorities, merely because the Germans employed the French police to do their dirty work for them.

Those who were released from camp were unanimous in their praise of the quality of the weekly parcel sent to them from this country by the Red Cross and St. John's War Organisation. Many of those who were interned had always lived sheltered lives, and one hesitates to consider what would have been the fate of these unfortunate people without all the good and nourishing things contained in the parcels. The rations provided at the camps by the Germans, while adequate to maintain life, were insufficient to maintain health, and the regular arrival of Red Cross parcels did much to remedy deficiencies in diet as well as to provide just a

little of the joy of life by the inclusion of such unobtainable things as tea, sugar, marmalade, chocolate, etc.

With the occupation of the former unoccupied zone in November 1942, many more British subjects have fallen into the hands of the Germans, and shortly after the total occupation had taken place it was announced that a number had been sent to internment camps.

POSTSCRIPT

WHILE the object of this book has been to depict life in France between the Armistice of 1940 and the total occupation of that country in November 1942, and above all to represent the views of various sections of the community prevailing in France during that period, it would be incomplete without some comment on the changes wrought by the Allied invasion of North Africa. French and British reaction to what the German-controlled Paris press and radio call the latest " British aggression against their former defenceless ally " has in many ways been remarkable, above all in so far as Admiral Darlan is concerned.

This book has not been an attempt to force the opinions of the authors down unwilling throats, but rather to ventilate the viewpoint of the French man-in-the-street and to give him a hearing above the welter of propaganda to which people of all nations are nowadays subjected without even always being aware of it. Events would seem to have proved that there has been a large element of truth in the opinions many French people expressed to us during the time we were in France, and that the façade of pseudo-collaboration maintained to delude the invader (and which deluded invader and friends alike) has now been lifted to show the true spirit and feelings of the French nation, including those who were called traitors to their country. The curtain has been lifted and the first act concluded with the assassination of Admiral Darlan, but the end of the play is as obscure as ever. However, the obscurity surrounding the Vichy Government has been somewhat lightened by the events of the past few months, and British public opinion has found it hard to accept such a radical change of policy as was brought about by Admiral Darlan's appointment by General Eisenhower as High Commissioner of French North Africa. The events

of to-day are not easy to reconcile with the propaganda of yesterday, at least in so far as the Vichy Government is concerned. As Darlan is dead, it is even now impossible to say what course his future actions would have taken, if one is not prepared to accept his statement regarding his political aims, but it is at least possible to place some reliance on the belief existing in many French minds to-day that the " attentiste " policy of the French Government of Vichy has been instrumental in saving much for France in the first place, and for the Allied Nations in the second place, out of the ruins of the defeat of France in June 1940.

The effect of the total occupation of France on the people of that country can only be beneficial to them viewed from its political aspect. Hitler did not divide France and leave part of it unoccupied for the pleasure of the vanquished, and the occupation of the former free zone will only further embarrass him by demanding additional numbers of occupation troops. He has lost 8c per cent of the imports from the North African colonies which used to find their way into Germany via the Armistice Commissions. What hopes he did have of converting the French Fleet to his own use now rest at the bottom of Toulon harbour. France has gained the one thing Germany wished to deny her — her national unity. North and South are now tied by a common bond, by their mutual hatred of the invader, by the ignominy of his presence, and by the privations his occupation has caused. The internal life of the whole country cannot but benefit from the new feeling of unity which Germany has unwittingly been instrumental in creating, and which she had consistently endeavoured to prevent since the Armistice.

In spite of German promises to the contrary, all vestige of freedom formerly possessed by the Vichy Government must now of necessity be swept away, and the French people will no longer suffer any illusions about its liberty of action. Pétain may still, for the sake of the prisoners of war, maintain a show of treating with the invader, but the former authority

and prestige of the Vichy Government will become a dead letter and its virtual disappearance will be regretted by few.

Only future events will show what has really been going on behind the scenes in France since the Armistice, and it may well be years before the truth about the Vichy Government and the various personalities connected with it will really be known. When it is known, posterity will be able to judge for itself whether or not public opinion in Britain and elsewhere had previously been too harsh in its judgment and had shown too little understanding of the political drama which has by no means yet reached its *dénouement*.

APPENDIX I

THE TERMS OF THE FRANCO-GERMAN ARMISTICE CONVENTION

THE following is the official text of the Armistice Convention signed on 22nd June in the Forest of Compiègne between the French plenipotentiaries and the delegate of the Führer.

Between Colonel-General Keitel, Chief of the German High Command, delegated by the Führer of the German Reich and Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht of the one part ;

And of the other part, the plenipotentiaries of the French Government, vested with the necessary powers, namely : General Huntziger, President of the Delegation ; the Ambassador, Mr. Noel, Vice-Admiral Le Luc, General Parisot, and Air Force General Bergeret.

The following Armistice Convention, of which the text is as follows, has been signed :

1. The French Government proclaims the cessation of hostilities against the German Empire in France, in the French possessions, the colonies, the protectorates and the mandated territories, as well as on sea. It orders those French units encircled by German troops to immediately lay down their arms.

2. In order to assure the protection of the interests of the German Reich, French territory will be occupied by German troops to the north and to the west of the line drawn on the attached map. The occupation of the territories which are to be occupied and which are not yet in German hands will start as soon as the Convention has been signed.

3. In those regions of France occupied by the Germans, the Reich is to exercise all the rights of an occupying power. The French Government undertakes to assist in all ways the carrying-out of orders made for the execution of these rights and to have them put into force with the help of the French administration. Consequently the French Government is immediately to notify

the authorities and public services of the occupied territories that they will have to conform to the decisions of the German military commanders and to collaborate faithfully with them.

The German Government intends to limit the occupation of the west coast of France, after the cessation of hostilities with England, to the minimum extent which may be necessary.

The Seat of the French Government. The French Government is free to establish itself in a town of its own choice in unoccupied territory, or, if it so desires it, to establish itself in Paris. In this case the German Government will give to the French Government and to the central administrations all facilities for putting into force the administration from Paris of occupied and unoccupied territory.

4. The French armed forces on land, sea, and in the air are to be disarmed and demobilised within a period later to be determined. This measure is not to be applied to those units which are necessary for the maintenance of internal order. Their numbers and their armament will be fixed by Germany and Italy. The French units to be found in the territories which are to be occupied by Germany must be brought back as quickly as possible into the territories which will not be occupied and are to be similarly liberated. Before setting out, these troops will lay down their arms and equipment in the exact spot where they happen to be at the moment of the entering into force of this Convention. They will be responsible for the handing over in good condition of these arms and of this material into the hands of the German troops.

5. As guarantee that the Armistice will be observed, France will deliver in good condition all the guns, anti-tank guns, military aeroplanes, anti-aircraft guns, infantry armament, transport equipment, and munitions of the French units which were fighting against Germany, and which happen to be, at the moment of the entering into force of the present Convention, in the territory which is not to be occupied by Germany. The extent of these deliveries will be fixed by the German Armistice Commission.

6. The remainder of the armaments, war material, and munitions of all kinds in the unoccupied region of France will be stored and put in safe custody under German or Italian control,

with the exception of that which is to be left at the disposition of authorised French units. The German High Command reserves for itself the right in this matter to take all the necessary measures to prevent the incorrect usage of these stocks.

The manufacture of new war material is immediately to cease in unoccupied territory.

7. In the territories which are to be occupied, all the ground and coastal fortifications with their armaments, munitions, material, stocks, and installations of all sorts are to be handed over in perfect condition. The plans of these fortifications, as well as those of the fortifications already taken by the German troops, must similarly be handed over. The exact situation of mines, minefields on land, etc., must be supplied to the German High Command. These obstructions must be removed by French forces at the request of the German authorities.

8. With the exception of that part which will be left to the French Government for the protection of its interests in its colonial empire, the French war fleet must be assembled in those ports which will later be designated. It will there be demobilised and disarmed under German or Italian control. The designation of the ports will be made according to the home bases of these ships in peace-time.

The German Government solemnly declares to the French Government that it has no intention of using for the purposes of war the French Fleet which will be found in the ports put under German control, with, however, the exception of the units which will be necessary to guard the coasts and to remove mines.

Moreover, the German Government solemnly and expressly declares that it does not intend to make any unreasonable claims on the French Fleet at the time of the conclusion of the peace.

With the exception of that part of the French Fleet (it will be fixed later) which is to defend French interests in her colonial empire, all the warships to be found outside France must be brought back to France.

9. The French High Command must give to the German High Command precise directions concerning all the mines laid by France, all the minefields near to ports or off the coasts, and all defensive positions. If the German High Command so requests,

the French forces must themselves remove the mines.

10. The French Government agrees not to undertake any hostile action whatsoever against the Reich with any part of the armed forces left at its disposition. Similarly the French Government will prevent members of the armed forces from leaving the country, as well as the transportation of arms, war material of any sort, warships, and aeroplanes to England or to any other foreign country whatsoever.

The French Government will forbid French subjects from fighting against the Reich in the armies of the countries which are still at war with the latter. French subjects who do not conform to this law will be treated by German troops as " francs-tireurs ".

11. Merchant ships of all classes, comprising coastal small craft or those used in the ports which are in the hands of the French, must not until further notice put to sea. The recommencement of commerical navigation will be subject to the approval of the German Government or to that of the Italian Government. The French merchant ships which are outside French ports will receive from the French Government the order to return to France, or, if that is not possible, to enter neutral ports.

All German merchant ships which have been captured and are in French ports are to be handed over intact on the demand of the German authorities.

12. All aircraft which are on French soil will be forthwith forbidden to take off. Any machine which takes off without German authorisation will be considered as hostile and treated as such by the German Air Force.

The aerodromes and installations of the air force which are in the unoccupied zone will be put under German or Italian control. Their being rendered useless may be demanded.

The French Government is bound to put at the disposition of the German authorities all foreign aircraft which are on unoccupied territory, or at least to prevent them from leaving. These aeroplanes are to be handed over to the German forces.

13. The French Government undertakes to see to it that in the territories which are to be occupied by the German troops all

the buildings, all the installations and stocks for the army are delivered intact to the German troops.

Moreover, it is to ensure that the ports, industrial installations, and shipbuilding yards be left as they are and that they be neither damaged nor destroyed. The same clause applies equally to the ways and means of communication, and in particular to the railways, roads, and canals, to the telegraphic and telephonic networks, to maritime signalling devices, and to means of guiding ships off the coasts. The French Government similarly undertakes, on the decision of the German High Command, to put in hand all the reconditioning which will be necessary. They will see that there is in occupied territory the necessary personnel and rolling stock of sufficient quantity for means of transport, and in the same proportion as for a normal peace-time period.

14. With regard to the French broadcasting stations, a restriction on transmitting will immediately be put into force. The recommencement of wireless transmission in unoccupied territory will become the subject of a separate agreement.

15. The French Government binds itself to assure across unoccupied territory the transit of goods between the German Empire and Italy to the extent required by the German Government.

16. The French Government, in agreement with the German authorities, will undertake the repatriation of the population in the occupied regions.

17. The French Government binds itself to prevent all transport of securities and foodstuffs from territory which is to be occupied into unoccupied territory or abroad. The measures concerning these securities and foodstuffs are to be taken in agreement with the German Government. However, the German Government will take into consideration the vital needs of the population of the unoccupied regions.

18. The cost of maintaining German troops in French territory falls on the French Government.

19. All German military and all German civilian prisoners who are actually in the hands of the French, including persons arrested or condemned, who have been put into prison and tried for an act carried out in the interests of the German Empire, must

be at once handed over to the German troops.

The French Government is obliged to hand over on demand all the Germans who are either in France or in French possessions, colonies, protectorates, and mandated territories who are demanded by name by the German Government.

The French Government binds itself to prevent German prisoners of war and civilian prisoners from being transferred from French possessions into foreign countries. A list of prisoners will be supplied who have been transported outside France, as well as of prisoners of war who are incapable of being moved owing to illness or wounds. The care of German prisoners of war who are either ill or wounded will be taken in hand by the German High Command.

20. The French military who are prisoners of war of the Germans will remain prisoners until the conclusion of a peace.

21. The French Government guarantees to keep in good condition and to hand over intact all chattels and securities which according to the treaty are to be put at the disposition of Germany, and which it is forbidden to transfer out of the country.

The French Government is responsible for all destruction, damage, or removals of property which go contrary to the spirit of the Convention.

22. The execution of the Armistice Convention is regulated and controlled by a German Armistice Commission which will carry out its duties according to the instructions of the German High Command. In addition this Commission will carry out the duties of assuring the necessary concordance between this Convention and the Franco-Italian Armistice Convention.

In order to represent French interests and to receive its executive orders from the German Armistice Commission, the French Government will send a delegation to the offices of the German Armistice Commission.

23. The Present Armistice Convention will come into force as soon as the French Government has made with the Italian Government an agreement on the cessation of hostilities. Hostilities will cease six hours after the time on which the Italian Government has made known to the Government of the Reich the conclusion of this agreement. The Government of the Reich

will make this time known to the French Government by means of wireless.

24. The Armistice Convention will remain in force until the conclusion of a peace treaty. It can be denounced at any moment and with immediate effect by the German Government if the French Government does not fulfil the obligations which it has assumed under this Convention.

This Armistice Convention has been signed in the Forest of Compiègne on the 22nd June 1940 at 18 hours 50 German summer time.

HUNTZIGER
KEITEL

The line mentioned in Article 2 of the Armistice Convention starts to the east of the Franco-Swiss frontier near Geneva, and is marked thereafter by the localities of Dôle, Paray-le-Monial, and Bourges until about 20 kilometres to the east of Tours. From there it passes at a distance of 20 kilometres to the east of the Tours–Angoulême–Libourne railway line, as well as further on by Mont-de-Marsan and Orthez as far as the Spanish frontier.

APPENDIX II

THE FRANCO-ITALIAN ARMISTICE

ARTICLE 1 : France will cease hostilities against Italy in Metropolitan France, in French North Africa, in the colonies, and in protected and mandated territories. She will similarly cease hostilities against Italy by sea and in the air.

Article 2 : The Italian troops will keep to, at the moment of the entering into force of the present Armistice Convention as well as for its duration, the lines which they have reached in all theatres of operations.

Article 3 : In French Metropolitan territory the zone, comprised between the line laid down in Article 2 and a line situated 50 kilometres from it as the crow flies, will be demilitarised for the duration of the Armistice.

In Tunisia the line comprised between the Tunis-Libya frontier and the line indicated on the attached map will be demilitarised for the duration of the Armistice.

In Algeria, as well as in the territories of French Africa situated to the south of Algeria and bordering on Libya, a zone situated between the Libyan frontier and a parallel line 200 kilometres distant will be demilitarised so long as hostilities last between Italy and the British Empire and for the duration of the present Armistice ; the territory of the colony of French Somaliland will be entirely demilitarised.

Italy will have the entire and permanent right for the duration of the Armistice to use the port and port installations of Djibouti and the French section of the Addis Ababa–Djibouti railway for any kind of transport whatsoever.

Article 4 : The zones to be demilitarised laid down in Article 3 will be evacuated by the French troops within the ten days following the cessation of hostilities, with the exception of the personnel strictly necessary for guarding and maintaining fortification works, barracks, magazines, and military formations, and of the forces for the maintenance of interior order which the

Armistice Commission will determine in each particular case.

Article 5 : Subject to the undertaking mentioned in Article 10 hereinafter, all mobile armaments and corresponding munitions existing in the zones to be demilitarised in French Metropolitan territory and in that bordering on Libya, other than those appertaining to the troops who are evacuating, as is laid down hereinbefore, the territories in question, must be evacuated within a period of a fortnight. Arms which form part of works and fortifications and their corresponding munitions must be rendered unusable within the same lapse of time.

In the territory of French Somaliland, all movable arms and their corresponding munitions, other than those appertaining to the troops who are evacuating the territory, will be laid down within the same period of a fortnight in the localities which will be fixed by the Italian Armistice Commission hereinafter mentioned.

For immobile arms and the munitions of works and fortifications existing in the said territory, the regulations fixed for French Metropolitan territory and for that bordering on Libya will be applied.

Article 6 : So long as hostilities last between Italy and the British Empire, fortified maritime strongpoints and the naval bases of Toulon, Bizerta, Ajaccio, and Oran (Mers-el-Kebir) will be demilitarised until the cessation of hostilities against the said Empire.

This demilitarisation is to be carried out within a period of two weeks and must be such that these strongpoints and bases be rendered unusable from the point of view of their offensive and defensive capacity ; their docking capacity will, under the control of the Italian Armistice Commission, be limited to the needs of the French warships which, under the conditions fixed by Article 12 hereinafter, will be based thereon.

Article 7 : In the zones, military and naval strongpoints, and naval bases to be demilitarised, the French civilian authorities and the necessary police forces for the maintenance of public order will carry out their ordinary functions. The territorial and maritime authorities which will be determined by the Italian Armistice Commission will also remain there.

Article 8 : The Italian Armistice Commission hereinafter

referred to will mark on the map the exact limits of the zones, military and maritime strongpoints, and naval bases to be demilitarised and the details of the methods of putting the demilitarisation into force. The said commission will have the entire and permanent right of controlling the carrying out in the said zones, strongpoints, and bases the measures fixed by the preceding Articles, either by means of visits of inspection or of a permanent delegation on the spot.

Article 9 : All the armed forces on land, on sea, and in the air in Metropolitan France will be demobilised and disarmed within a period to be later fixed, with the exception of those formations necessary for the maintenance of internal order.

The strength and armament of these formations will be determined by Italy and Germany.

In so far as the territories of North Africa, Syria, and French Somaliland are concerned, the Italian Armistice Commission, while laying down the methods of demobilisation and disarmament, will take into consideration the special importance of the maintenance of order within the said territories.

Article 10 : Italy reserves the right to demand as guarantee of the execution of the Armistice Convention the handing over in whole or in part of the total armaments of the infantry, artillery, armoured cars, tanks, petrol-driven vehicles, horse-drawn vehicles, and munitions belonging to the units which have been engaged or deployed, no matter in what manner, against the armed forces of Italy.

These arms and materials must be handed over in the condition in which they actually are at the moment of the entering into force of the Armistice.

Article 11 : The arms, munitions, and war material of all sorts which remain in French unoccupied territory, including the arms and munitions evacuated from the zones, military and naval strongpoints, and naval bases to be demilitarised, with the exception of that part which will be left at the disposal of the authorised units, will be assembled and placed under Italian or German control.

The manufacture of war materials of all kinds in the unoccupied territories must cease.

Article 12 : Units of the French Navy will be concentrated in those ports which will be designated. They will be demobilised and disarmed under Italian or German control.

Exception will be made of those units which the Italian or German Governments will authorise for the purpose of safeguarding French colonial territories.

The basing of naval units in peace-time will be a factor determining the choice of the ports hereinabove referred to.

All warships outside Metropolitan France which will not be taken as necessary for the protection of French colonial interests will be recalled to Metropolitan ports.

The Italian Government declares that it has no intention of using during the present war those units of the French Fleet placed under its control, and similarly it has no intention of making any claims on the French Fleet on the conclusion of a peace.

During the Armistice the French warships necessary for minesweeping referred to in the following Article can, however, be demanded.

Article 13 : All minefields will be notified to the Italian High Command. The French authorities will make provision within a period of ten days for having removed by means of their own personnel all rail and road blocks, minefields and mined places in general prepared in the zones, military and naval strongpoints, and naval bases to be demilitarised.

Article 14 : The French Government, in addition to binding itself not to undertake in any place whatsoever any hostile act against Italy, also binds itself to prevent members of its armed forces and French citizens in general from leaving its national territory in order to participate in any way whatsoever in hostilities against Italy.

The Italian troops will apply, against those who break this rule and against those French citizens formerly abroad who undertake collectively or individually hostile acts against Italy, the treatment reserved for combatants outside the law.

Article 15 : The French Government undertakes to prevent warships, aeroplanes, arms, war material, and munitions of any sort, being French property or existing in French territory or

territory under the control of France, from being sent into the British Empire or other foreign states.

Article 16 : No ship of the French merchant marine will be allowed to leave port until the Italian or German Government grants the partial or total recommencement of French maritime traffic.

French merchant ships which are not in French ports or placed under French control at the time of the Armistice will be called back to these ports or directed to neutral ports.

Article 17 : All Italian merchant ships captured will be immediately reloaded with all the cargo which was destined for Italy at the moment of their capture.

Non-perishable merchandise belonging to Italy or destined for Italy captured on board non-Italian ships must similarly be reloaded.

Article 18 : It is forthwith forbidden that aeroplanes on French territory or territories placed under French control leave the ground.

All the aerodromes and all the installations of the above-mentioned territories will be placed under German or Italian control.

Foreign aircraft which are in the territories hereinabove referred to will be handed over to the Italian or German military authorities.

Article 19 : Until the time when the Italian or German Government fixes other regulations, radio transmissions in general will be forbidden in the territories of Metropolitan France. The conditions under which radio communication will be carried on between France and French North Africa, Syria, and French Somaliland will be laid down by the Italian Armistice Commission.

Article 20 : The traffic of merchandise in transit between Germany and Italy across unoccupied territory will be unrestricted.

Article 21 : All prisoners of war and civilian Italian internees arrested or condemned for political or warlike reasons, or for any acts whatsoever in favour of the Italian Government, will be immediately liberated and handed over to the Italian military authorities.

Appendix II

Article 22 : The French Government makes itself guarantor for the safe custody of all that it must or may yet have to hand over by virtue of the present Convention.

Article 23 : An Italian Armistice Commission under orders from the Italian Supreme Command will be charged with the settlement and control, either directly or by means of its existing organisations, of the present Convention.

It will similarly be charged with the co-ordination of the present Convention with that already concluded between Germany and France.

Article 24 : At the office of the Commission referred to in the preceding Article will be set up a French Delegation charged with making known the wishes of its Government, relative to the carrying-out of the present Convention and of transmitting to the competent French authorities the desires of the Italian Armistice Commission.

Article 25 : The present Armistice Commission will enter into force at the moment of its signature.

Hostilities will cease in all theatres of operations six hours after the moment on which the Italian Government has communicated to the German Government the conclusion of the present agreement.

The Italian Government will notify this moment to the French Government by wireless.

Article 26 : The present Armistice Convention will remain in force until the conclusion of the peace treaty. It can be denounced by Italy at any moment with immediate effect if the French Government does not fulfil the obligations it has assumed.

The undersigned plenipotentiaries, duly authorised, declare their approval of the terms hereinabove laid down.

(*Signed*) MARSHAL PIETRO BADOGLIO
GENERAL HUNTZIGER

Rome, 24*th June* — XVIII, 19 hours 15.

APPENDIX III

THE following is the full text of the letter addressed by Hitler to Marshal Pétain dated 11th November 1942 :

" Since the day when the State called upon me to direct the destinies of my people I have ceaselessly striven to improve our relations with France, even at the price of heavy sacrifices to Germany. All my efforts proved futile. That was not my fault.

" The declaration of war which Britain and France made upon Germany on September 3, 1939, affected me deeply, and the German people with me. Neither Britain nor France was able to produce any plausible reasons. In spite of the swift and, for some, disastrous termination of this campaign, I could not rid myself of the idea that it was essential to prepare the ground, if only with a view to the future, for the establishment of a better European solidarity.

" It was in this spirit that I introduced into the armistice terms not one clause which would be contradictory to the spirit of a truce. The German Reich did not, at the time of France's extreme weakness, indulge in any extortion, but was satisfied only with ensuring that the armistice should not be treated as an ephemeral episode, but as a true conclusion of the war. Finally, the Reich demanded that in no circumstances should this armistice, by reason of its very moderation, become a source of deterioration in the military position of Germany in the event of the intransigence of France's former allies causing a prolongation of the war. At that time Germany made no claims upon the French Navy. She did not infringe in the slightest degree on the sovereignty of France in her colonial empire.

" In the hope of being able to force the issue in Europe, Britain and America have now begun to attack and occupy French territory in North and West Africa. France, on her part, is not in a position to hold her own for long against these aggressions. Germany and Italy will in no circumstances allow the terms of the armistice to result in consequences which must inevitably turn to their disadvantage.

" Careful study of Anglo-American military transport, as well as other information, permits of no doubt but that the next objectives of Anglo-American invasion will be Corsica and the south of France. In consequence of this the foundations of the armistice have ceased to exist, inasmuch as France is no longer in a position to acquit herself *vis-à-vis* Germany and Italy. Having regard to these facts, the Governments of Germany and Italy have agreed to take, in all urgency, all measures to arrest in the most effective manner the continuation of Anglo-American aggression.

" In these circumstances, M. le Maréchal, I have the honour, and at the same time the sorrow, to inform you that in order to avoid the danger which threatens us I have, in agreement with the Italian Government, been compelled to give the order to my troops to cross France by the most direct route in order to occupy the Mediterranean coast and, second, to take part in the protection of Corsica against the impending aggression of Anglo-American armed forces.

" It was the conduct of a French General which chiefly made me act in this manner. While a prisoner he simulated illness, and for this reason was granted certain privileges of which he profited in order to escape. Contrary to the assurance which I received regarding his pledge to you, M. le Maréchal, he deemed it fit henceforth not only to fight against Germany, in the service of the Anglo-Saxon Powers, but even against his own country.

" The action of the German troops is not directed against you, the Chief of State and venerable chief of the various French soldiers of the world war, nor against the French Government, nor even against all those Frenchmen who desire peace and who, above all, do not wish that their beautiful land should again become a theatre of war. At the same time I should like to repeat my assurance that the entry of the allied troops into France is not directed against the French armed forces, and that I nourish the hope that one day I shall defend Europe side by side with them, as well as African possessions belonging to Europe, against the coalition of the Anglo-Saxon Powers. Finally, the entry of allied troops is not directed against the French Administration, which will continue, I hope, its functions as in the past. The only end

we pursue by this measure is to prevent the repetition in the south of France of the present developments in North Africa.

" As to the precautions to be taken in that connexion, I feel responsible not only before my people but in a larger sense before all Europe. The re-entry into this continent may lead to the destruction of all European States and to the annihilation of European culture. Allow me to give you the assurance, M. le Maréchal, that as soon as the situation in the Mediterranean has improved, and there is no longer any question of endangering German interests under the terms of the Armistice Convention, it is my decision to withdraw my troops back to the former line of demarcation. Finally, I should like to give you my assurance that both you, M. le Maréchal, and your Government are at liberty to move freely and without any hindrance on all French territory. Formerly I was opposed to the transfer of the French Government to Versailles solely because I feared that enemy propaganda would maintain that you, Monsieur, and your Government, were deprived of all liberty and consequently not in a position to devote yourselves to your task. However, in view of the circumstance stated above, that the Reich and Italy have been obliged, in order to safeguard the provisions of the armistice and to meet the threat of Anglo-American invasions, to occupy the remaining frontiers of France, the reason for the maintenance of the seat of the French Government at Vichy has disappeared. May I take this opportunity to inform you of the abrogation of the clause in force until the present date.

" I can understand, M. le Maréchal, how hard is the fate overhanging your country. Permit me at the same time to ask you to respect the destiny of my own people, compelled for years to wage a war which has been imposed upon them without any fault of their own. And now our people have been forced into a sudden decision, solely under dire necessity. Let us hope the circumstances will not bring with them further bloodshed between France and Germany. May the measures taken against the violators of peace outside the European continent bring about a *rapprochement* of the people of Europe. Germany has therefore decided to defend the frontiers of your country side by side with the French soldiers, and at the same time the frontiers of culture

and European civilization. As far as the German troops are concerned, they will do what is necessary to attain this aim in their own way, which is the way of friendship towards the French people. I should like to ask you, M. le Maréchal, to see that the Government takes the necessary measures for the elimination of all tension and to guarantee the putting into force of this necessary measure, also in the interest of France. I beg you to accept, M. le Maréchal, the assurance of my high esteem.

ADOLF HITLER."

APPENDIX IV

THE following is the full text of the letter addressed by Hitler to Marshal Pétain dated 27th November 1942 :

" HERR MARSHAL—When on November 11, 1942, I, in agreement with the allies of Germany, had to make the decision to occupy the French south coast in order to safeguard the defence of the Reich in the war forced upon us by France and England, I did it in the hope of bringing about a clarification of the domestic situation of your country, which was not only in the interests of Germany and Italy, but also in those of France herself. Looking back, I may say once more that in September 1939 it was not Germany which declared war on France or England, but that, on the contrary, ever since I took over the power of government I have hardly missed an opportunity of trying to change the relationship, especially between Germany and France, which had been burdened by the Treaty of Versailles, into a genuine collaboration of friendship. In doing so Germany never made any demands on France except one — not to reject Germany's proffered hand.

" Unfortunately, the unscrupulous Anglo-Saxons and, above all, the Jewish wire-pullers in those countries succeeded in interpreting every conciliatory gesture by the new Reich as a sign of German weakness, and every peace offer as a sign of an impending collapse. Whereas in Germany no pressure was brought to bear upon France, and no demand was made either by the Government or in the press which might strike at her honour, in Paris responsible agitators demanded the splitting up of the German Reich, the imposition of slavery on the German people, the abandonment of the principles of our social legislation, and above all the complete re-establishment of the unlimited right to pillage of the Jewish race, brought back to Germany in convenient numbers.

" I am aware that you yourself, Monsieur le Maréchal, played no part in these warlike activities ; but I am also aware that I myself, after the Polish campaign, renewed my earlier declarations,

and, without any demands on the part of the German Reich, proposed a peace which was only intended to serve European collaboration. But, as already in the first days of September 1939, after the end of the campaign in Poland those whose interest it was that Europe should be torn asunder, or who had a financial interest in the war, stifled this appeal to reason and insisted on an extension of the war at any cost. It was thus that the struggle forced upon the German Reich by your then Government, and incidentally upon Italy, ally of the Reich, had to be settled by arms instead of by reason.

" In spite of a victory unique in the history of the world, I have done nothing which could wound the honour of France. In the armistice convention I only exacted security, which was to prevent the resumption of the struggle in all circumstances. Never was any demand subsequently made which was in contradiction of this. You know, Monsieur le Maréchal, that all assertions made in British or American quarters, as well as by all agitators greatly interested in this war, to the effect that Germany wanted to seize the French Fleet or had made demands in this sense, are pure inventions or deliberate lies. Whereas the Reich, as a consequence of the war imposed by France, must bear ever heavier sacrifices, the French people were able to live in peace, excepting so far as France's own allies inflicted bloody sacrifices on her by aggression from sea or air.

" At the same time, the German Reich little by little set free over 700,000 prisoners out of 1,960,000, a measure which is, I believe, unique in the history of war. If this measure was progressively neutralised, it was only because, unfortunately, intransigent elements in your country always ended by opposing real collaboration. It was your own wish, Monsieur le Maréchal, that you should have a talk with me in order to work out the possibilities of such collaboration. I acceded to this wish, and conversations took place at Montoire which, I am convinced, should have provided the basis for a general *détente*. Unfortunately, those who have an interest in war in France only a few weeks later succeeded in ruining this collaboration, on a pretext that was for me, personally, exceedingly injurious. I am obliged to affirm here that they openly averred that Napoleon's son was only

sent back by me to Paris with the aim of enticing you there, Monsieur le Maréchal, and thus bringing you into German hands.

" I must now place it on record that it was you yourself who at that time pressed for authorisation to establish yourself at Versailles, and that I had to refuse for the reason that in the remainder of the world it would have been said, most unjustly, that the French Government was under German constraint. Although this incident was in direct opposition to my attitude to the armistice, I drew no consequences from it, for I had and still have the conviction that there are also among the French people millions of workers, peasants, and working middle-class people who, at the bottom of their hearts, are foreign to these machinations, and only ask for peace.

" I may be allowed to state here again, Herr Marshal, that not at any time did I myself take the opportunity of asking any member of the French Government to come and see me, but that all conversations have always taken place only at the request of the French Government themselves. The two conversations with Darlan took place at his express wish, and in your name.

" The landing of American and British troops in French North-West and North Africa, undertaken, as has been proved, with the aid of innumerable criminal generals and officers, has since ruined all the armistice conventions as they are defined in the preamble to the armistice, and has forced Germany, in agreement with her allies, to take the necessary measures of security. On November 11 all the events which led to this British and American action were not known to me. But to-day I know, and you, Herr Marshal, know also, that this occupation took place at the express wish of those French elements which once were the warmongers and which still have not disappeared from the atmosphere of the public and, above all, the military life of France. That French generals and admirals have broken their word of honour towards Germany — and that on many occasions — is regrettable in itself, but that you, Herr Marshal, should have to admit that, even with regard to yourself, such generals, admirals, and officers have violated their oath, forces me to recognise that any agreement with such elements is completely useless.

" I am now transmitting to you proof that since the occupation of November 11, 1942, solemn assurances were again given which were broken on the same day that they were given, as can be seen from the order now revealed. It has been ascertained that the Admiral, by his assurance that the French Navy in Toulon would fight against any enemy attack, again deceived Germany and Italy, because on November 12 — the day after he gave that assurance — he gave an order not to open fire in any circumstances in the event of an eventual landing of British and American forces.

" In the meantime, many other breaches of the armistice have come to light. I may be allowed, Herr Marshal, to bring the following to your notice : First, I am conscious that you personally have no part in all this and that therefore you will suffer most by them. Second, I have to represent the interests of a people on whom war was imposed and who are obliged, for the sake of self-preservation, to fight against those who instigated this war and who are to-day carrying it on with the aim of destroying the whole of Europe, in the service of a Jewish Anglo-Saxon clique which is partly European and partly extra-European. Third, I am forced finally to continue this war in the name of those millions not only of my own people, who have freed themselves from the pressure of a capitalistic and unscrupulous exploitation and are not willing to be for ever the victims of international exploitation and of the final destruction of their nationality.

" Fourth, the German people, in whose name I am making this statement, have no feelings of hatred against the French people, but I as their leader and representative am determined in no circumstances to hand over Germany and Europe to chaos by tolerating the machinations of those elements which caused this dreadful war. I will therefore oppose those institutions and especially those persons who want to hinder, even in the future, all collaboration between the French and German peoples. I will oppose those who, already burdened with the blood-guilt for the outbreak of the war, now apparently consider that the hour has again struck to create in the south of Europe a base for the aggression of extra-continental Powers.

" Fifth, this is why, after learning that the French generals

and admirals have broken their word of honour by their now proved intention to open to the Anglo-Jewish warmongers Metropolitan France as well as North Africa, I have given the order to occupy Toulon at once, and to prevent the ships from leaving port or to destroy them, and to break all resistance, should this be necessary, with the utmost use of force. This is not a fight against honourable officers and soldiers, but against those warmongering criminals for whom still not enough blood has been shed and who are constantly seeking further possibilities of continuing and extending this catastrophe. I have therefore given the order to demobilise all those units of the French armed forces which, contrary to the orders of their own Government, are being instigated by their officers to resist Germany actively.

" Sixth, these measures, which I have only been forced to take by the disloyal attitude of your admirals and generals, are directed, as already mentioned, not against France or the French soldiers as such. It is my sincere hope, in which I know I am at one with the views of my ally, that it may be possible once again to endow the French State with an army whose officers will show obedience at least to their own Chief of State, and thus give a necessary guarantee for the conclusion of international agreements.

" However painful these facts may appear to you at the present time, Monsieur le Maréchal, you will find solace and comfort in considering that it is inconceivable that a State can for long exist without a disciplined and obedient army, and that thus the re-constitution of a navy, an army, and an air force blindly obedient to you cannot constitute a misfortune for France but, on the contrary, a happy development.

" I do not wish to conclude this letter without assuring you again that this step, which has been forced upon me, does not in the slightest diminish my wish to co-operate with France but, on the contrary, will help towards a practical realisation of this policy. It is furthermore my irrevocable decision to assist France in regaining her colonial empire which, in spite of all assurances to the contrary, has been stolen by the Anglo-Saxons. This decision will be fulfilled with all the means at the disposal of the Reich. It was never the intention of Germany and Italy to destroy the French colonial empire or to wipe it out.

"It is now up to the French Government to accept the German measures, which were unavoidable, in such a way that no further shedding of blood shall take place and that at last the conditions for really successful co-operation, fruitful for all concerned, shall be created. Field-Marshal von Rundstedt has authority to make all necessary orders and agreements on Germany's side, and will, my dear Marshal, be at your disposal at any time. I conclude this letter in the hope that a collaboration — in which we expect from France nothing but loyalty and the understanding of the common fate of Europe — will now begin. I beg you to accept, Monsieur le Maréchal, the expression of my high personal consideration.

ADOLF HITLER."

APPENDIX V

THE following is the text of the letter from Marshal Pétain in reply to letters from Hitler dated 11th and 27th November 1942 :

" MR. CHANCELLOR—France, in her misfortune, had continued to entertain towards her army, her fleet, and her air force feelings of close attachment inspired by her fidelity to the military traditions of her history. In allowing her, under the armistice convention, to keep certain elements of this army, you showed your understanding of the value of such sentiments, the nobility of which the German people is able to appreciate.

" The Anglo-Saxon aggression in French Africa and the treason of certain leaders led you to take measures such as the occupation of the frontiers and the Mediterranean coast, and the demobilisation of the French armed forces. I can only bow to these decisions, which have had painful repercussions throughout the whole country.

" You rightly deem it inconceivable that a State can in the long run exist without a disciplined and obedient army. To this effect my first duty is to reconstitute an army capable of ensuring the safety of France and her empire. Marshal von Rundstedt having been entrusted by you, so far as concerns German action, with the taking of all decisions and the conclusion of all necessary arrangements, I am asking him this very day to be so good as to come and confer with me on these different questions.

" I was touched, Mr. Chancellor, by the personal references you were good enough to make to me at the end of your letter, so far as concerns your determination to collaborate with France and aid her to reconquer her colonial domain. The French Government on their side, in all good faith, will pursue a policy which should ensure its future in a reorganised Europe.

" In refusing to quit the mother territory and in asking for an armistice, I wished to spare the French people greater misfortunes, believing that an agreement in honour between our two peoples was not impossible. This policy, which serves at the

same time the interests of France and those of the European peoples, can, however, only bear fruit under the authority of a Government enjoying full freedom of action such as you yourself were good enough to guarantee in your message to the French people on November 11, 1942.

" In increasing the powers of President Laval, head of the Government, I showed my willingness to see established between our two countries relations of mutual confidence for a policy of understanding. And I reckon, Mr. Chancellor, on your spirit of comprehension, to facilitate the attainment of this objective.

" Please accept, Mr. Chancellor, the expression of my high personal consideration.

(*Signed*) PHILIPPE PÉTAIN."

In announcing this text in December 1942, the Vichy news agency did not give the date of the letter but said that it had " just been sent ".

THE END

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